European Security in the Twenty-first Century

The challenge of multipolarity

Adrian Hyde-Price

Contemporary Security Studies

EUROPEAN SECURITY IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

Europe's political and strategic landscape has been deeply transformed by the end of the Cold War. This book explores the implications of those changes, arguing that the contemporary European security system is facing renewed turbulence and uncertainty. Using structural realist theory, Adrian Hyde-Price analyses the new security agenda confronting Europe in the twenty-first century and explains why Europe is not 'primed for peace': rather, it faces new security threats and the challenge of multipolarity. For example, the Iraq War has exposed deep divisions in transatlantic relations; in the east, a resurgent and increasingly assertive Russia has emerged; and at the heart of Europe lies Germany, which has re-learnt its former role as the pivot of the European balance of power. If the emergence of 'balanced' multipolarity has weakened the cohesion of both NATO and the EU, this volume analyses how it has also created new possibilities for great-power cooperation to tackle security problems. The conclusion reflects on the inherently competitive and tragic nature of international politics, and argues that realism provides the only firm foundations for an ethical foreign and security policy.

Combining sophisticated theoretical analysis with empirical case-studies, this book will be of interest to all students of International Relations, European politics and international security.

Adrian Hyde-Price is Professor of Politics and International Relations at the University of Leicester. He is the author of *Germany and European Order* (2000), *The International Politics of East Central Europe* (1996) and *European Security Beyond the Cold War* (1991).

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DEDICATED WITH LOVE TO MY
DAUGHTERS,
REBECCA AND SARAH

God, give us the serenity to accept what cannot be changed;
Give us the courage to change what should be changed;
Give us the wisdom to distinguish one from the other.
Reinhold Niebuhr, 'Serenity Prayer'

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

'Ut vitam habeant'

This book was written during my term in office as Head of Politics and International Relations at the University of Leicester. I am grateful to the university for granting me a period of advanced study leave during which the bulk of the research for this book was carried out. The city of Leicester – one of the most multicultural cities in Europe – has provided a congenial home for my family and me since September 2001, and I have been fortunate to work at the University of Leicester during a period in which the institution has experienced a period of dynamic – although sometimes unsettling – development and transformation.

Leicester has proven to be a singularly appropriate place to reflect on the primary issue that has preoccupied me for many years: the causes of war and conflict, and the conditions of peace, in the international system. Each morning as I cycle to work, I cross Victoria Park, a beautiful expanse of greenery lying to the immediate south of the university campus. In one corner of the park there is a large boulder behind a small iron fence. On it is a simple inscription:

IN TRIBUTE AND
MEMORY OF THOSE MEN OF
THE UNITED STATES (ALL AMERICAN)
82ND AIRBORNE DIVISION
WHO SERVED IN LEICESTER AND COUNTY
PRIOR TO THE 'D' DAY INVASION OF
EUROPE 1944
They came in Freedom They fought with gallantry
Many never to return to their Homeland

This memorial provides a small but poignant reminder of Allied collaboration in the Second World War. Further on, closer to the university and standing on a ridge overlooking the city, stands the imposing 1925 Cenotaph War Memorial to Leicestershire's dead in the Great War – designed by Sir Edward Lutyens, and regarded by many as one of his finest works. These two memorials in close vicinity to the university campus are sobering reminders of the human costs of

war and the blood sacrifices of past generations. The University of Leicester itself was a product of the Great War, having been founded as a peace memorial to those who gave their lives in that terrible conflict. The 'Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland College', as it was first known, was founded in 1921 following generous donations of land and capital by families who had lost loved ones in the war. Its function as a living memorial to the dead of the First World War is reflected in the university motto, *Ut vitam habeant* ('that they shall have life'). Today, the university provides a place for study and contemplation for students from across Europe and from all corners of the globe.

Whilst this book was written in Leicester, its origins lie further back in time, and its influences come from farther afield. I first worked on the European security system as a Research Fellow on the International Security Programme at the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House), London, during the exciting and eventful years from 1987–90 when the Cold War came to an end. I continued my study of European security as a Lecturer in the Department of Politics at the University of Southampton. During this time I wrote a book on *The International Politics of East Central Europe* examining the strategic implications of the 'return to Europe' of the Visegrad Four for the European security system. In 1996 I took up the post of Senior Lecturer in the Institute for German Studies at the University of Birmingham, where I worked on German foreign and security policy, and Germany's pivotal role in the reshaping of post-Cold War European order. On 1 September 2001, shortly before the terrorist attacks of 9/11, I took up the Chair of Politics and International Relations at the University of Leicester. Over the last decade, I have enjoyed periods of research study at the Swedish Institute of International Affairs in Stockholm; the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Bonn; and the University of Lund. I have also benefited from a NATO Research Fellowship which allowed me to examine 'security governance' in the Baltic Sea region, as well as from a British Academy grant to study European democracies and coercive diplomacy. More recently, I have had the privilege of working with Israeli, European and American colleagues on collaborative projects on 'stable peace' theory, and on Isaiah's irenic prophecy to 'beat swords into ploughshares'.

This research reflects my long-standing interests in contemporary European security and in the problems inherent in fostering international peace and cooperation. However, this book is very different in approach and tone from my previous work: indeed, much of what follows in these pages involves an implicit criticism of the theoretical approach which informed my previous research. Whereas my earlier writings reflected the influence of the English School, social constructivism and, to some extent, the classical realist tradition, this book is firmly rooted in structural realism.

My road to realism has been a long and somewhat tortuous one. The journey began because I sensed a growing dissonance between the liberal-idealist expectations of the English School, social constructivism and critical security studies, and the realities of the post-Cold War world. During the 1990s, most scholars

sought to broaden and widen the concept of 'security', denuding it of its central concern with the causes of war and the conditions of peace, at the very time that 'soft power' failed in the Balkans, NATO waged its first combat operations and the EU moved to equip itself with a 60,000-strong Rapid Reaction Corps. My reflections on this paradox of the post-Cold War world were accompanied by empirical research on coercive diplomacy and the use of force, and a growing historical interest in the relationship between war and the development of the modern state. At the same time, I became increasingly conscious of the theoretical limitations of the international society approach and of social constructivism. As I began to understand the nature and potential of deductive theory and engaged more openly with the realist canon, I underwent an 'epistemological break' comparable to that attributed to Karl Marx by the French structuralist, Louis Althusser (who subsequently went mad and strangled his wife, but of that we shall speak no more).

This book is the product of many influences, and in its writing I have incurred many debts. My greatest debt is owed to my wife, Lisbeth Aggestam: an accomplished scholar in her own right, she has read most draft chapters, and provided critical but constructive advice. The book would have been worse – and much less nuanced – without her criticism, support and steadying influence. I would also like to thank my parents and two sisters for their constant love, encouragement and emotional sustenance throughout my varied academic career.

The arguments developed in the pages of this book first took form in the summer and autumn of 2004, and have subsequently been 'shaped and shoved' through discussion and debate with colleagues too legion in number to comprehensively catalogue. I must begin by extending my appreciation to John J. Mearsheimer, who has been a distant source of inspiration and encouragement. I would also like to thank the following for their contribution to the development of my thinking and/or comments on draft chapters: Dave Allen, Walter Andrusyszyn, Barry Buzan, Frederick Bynander, Michael Clarke, Raymond Cohen, Mick Cox, Stuart Croft, Peter Dombrowski, John Dumbrell, David Dunn, Tim Dunne, Hans-Georg Ehrhart, Heinz Gärtner, Jan Hallenberg, Vladimir Handl, Gunilla Herolf, Darryl Howlett, Magnus Jerneck, Arie Kacowicz, Mareike Kleine, Kerry Longhurst, Tim Lynch, Ian Manners, Benjamin Miller, Daniel Nelson, Tomas Niklasson, Willie Paterson, Galia Press-Barnathan, Wyn Rees, Matthew Rendall, Andrew Ross, Sten Rynning, Richard Saull, Erwin Schmidl, Michael Sheehan, Helene Sjursten, Mike Smith, Terry Terriff, Lotta Wagnsson, Mark Webber, Brian White, Richard Whitman and Marcin Zaborowski. Thanks are also due to my publisher, Andrew Humphrys, who has overseen this project from the start.

Early versions of the main arguments presented here were given at a number of specialist academic conferences and workshops. I am grateful to participants at the following conferences for their helpful comments and criticisms: the ARENA 'Civilian Power Europe' workshop in Oslo, November 2004; the English School panel at the BISA conference, Warwick, December 2004;

the Stockholm National Defence College workshops on the 'New Strategic Triangle' and the EU as a 'Strategic Actor', November 2004 and November 2005 respectively; the 'Swords into Ploughshares' workshop in Florence, June 2005; the panel on European Security Governance at the Budapest ECPR, September 2005; the Launde Abbey conference on 'The Church and British Foreign Policy', October 2005; the Loughborough European Studies research seminar, November 2005; the workshop on 'Mitteleuropa' organised by the Austrian Ministry of Defence, November 2005; the panel on 'The New Strategic Triangle' at the ISA, San Diego, March 2005; and the Middle East Technical University International Relations conference in Ankara on international security, July 2006. I am also much in debt to discussions with practitioners at the NATO Defence College in Rome and the UK Joint Command and Staff College at Shrivenham.

Last but certainly not least, I dedicate this book to my two daughters, Rebecca and Sarah. They have been an inestimable source of joy and contentment over the years, and have been remarkably patient whilst 'Daddy's working'. I hope the world they grow up in is a peaceful one, despite my realist premonitions: in the spirit of Antonio Gramsci, 'pessimism of the intellect, optimism of the will'.

ABBREVIATIONS

ABM	Anti-Ballistic Missile (treaty)
BMD	Ballistic Missile Defence
BSEC	Black Sea Economic Cooperation
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CBSS	Council of Baltic Sea States
CEFTA	Central European Free Trade Association
CENTCOM	Central Command
CFE	Conventional Forces in Europe (treaty)
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CJTF	Combined Joint Task Force
CMEA	Council of Mutual Economic Assistance
CSBM	Confidence and Security Building Measures
CSCE	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
CTBT	Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty
EAPC	Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council
EC	European Community
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
ECU	European Currency Unit
EEC	European Economic Community
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EMU	Economic and Monetary Union
EPC	Economic and Political Cooperation
ESDI	European Security and Defence Identity
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
G7	Group of Seven
G8	Group of Eight
GATT	General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs
GDP	Gross domestic product

GDR	German Democratic Republic
GUAM	Georgia, Ukraine, Armenia and Moldova
GUUAM	Georgia, Ukraine, Uzbekistan, Armenia and Moldova
IAEA	International Atomic Energy Authority
IFOR	Implementation Force
IGC	Inter-Governmental Conference
IISS	International Institute for Strategic Studies
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IR	International Relations
JDAM	Joint Direct Attack Munitions
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
JPC	Joint Permanent Council
KFOR	Kosovo Force
NAC	North Atlantic Council
NACC	North Atlantic Cooperation Council
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NMD	National Missile Defence
NPT	Non-Proliferation Treaty
NRC	NATO-Russian Council
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
PfP	Partnership for Peace
PHARE	Poland and Hungary economic assistance programme
RMA	Revolution in Military Affairs
SALT	Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty
SFOR	Stabilisation Force
START	Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty
TEU	Treaty on European Union
UN	United Nations
UNPROFOR	United Nations Protection Force
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WEU	Western European Union
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTO	World Trade Organisation

1

INTRODUCTION

> Though human society has roots which lie deeper in history than the beginning of human life, men have made comparatively little progress in solving the problem of their aggregate existence. Each century originates a new complexity and each new generation faces a new vexation in it. For all the centuries of experience, men have not yet learned how to live together without compounding their vices and covering each other 'with mud and with blood'.
>
> Reinhold Niebuhr[1]

Harold Macmillan once told a young journalist that politicians had only one thing to fear: 'Events, old boy, events.' Events have certainly conspired to confound the hopes of a 'new world order' and a Europe 'whole and free' which were widespread after the end of the Cold War. Europeans may no longer live with the fear of an East–West conflict and nuclear Armageddon, but they are having to come to terms with a new range of security threats and a less predictable European international order. The heady optimism of the *annus mirabilis* of 1989 has faded as concerns have grown about terrorism, proliferation, regional conflicts, transnational crime and failed states.[2] The 1990s opened with a major war in Iraq and closed with another in the Balkans. In between, Europeans found themselves struggling with a series of conflicts which required the use of coercive military power. Paradoxically, therefore, despite hopes for a long-awaited 'peace dividend', Europe's armed forces have been more active than ever before. 'We have slain a large dragon', it has been said, 'but we now live in a jungle filled with a bewildering variety of poisonous snakes.'[3]

As the twenty-first century unfolds, it is already evident that Europe faces a more uncertain and turbulent future. Both NATO and the EU have expanded to absorb new members from the former Soviet bloc, but NATO lacks clear purpose and strategic rationale, while the European integration process has stalled in the wake of the fiasco over the EU constitution. At the same time, transatlantic relations have deteriorated as a series of traumatic crises have contributed to a process of continental drift. In the East, Russia is increasingly

asserting itself as the Eurasian great power, whilst Germany – Europe's *Zentralmacht* – is no longer the 'reflexive multilateralist' and loyal transatlantic ally it once appeared to be. Not surprisingly, therefore, events are providing the catalyst for a renewed debate about the future of the European security system in the twenty-first century.

I EUROPEAN SECURITY BEYOND THE COLD WAR

The research puzzle

This book addresses the question at the heart of these debates: *how stable and durable is Europe's post-Cold War security order, and what are the prospects for peace and cooperation in the continent?* Rather than simply narrating recent events and providing an empirically rich description of the European security system, however, this book has a more ambitious aim: it seeks to delve beneath the surface play of events and to identify the underlying trends and structural dynamics of contemporary European security.

To this end, this book draws on realist international theory: more specifically, 'structural' or 'neo' realism. Realist international theory is widely recognised to be one of the most influential and theoretically sophisticated approaches to the study of international politics.[4] It is therefore something of an anomaly that it has had so little impact on the study of European security. Few European scholars have utilised the analytical tools offered by realism, and even in the USA, where the theory has been most influential, few neorealist analyses of the European security system have been undertaken.

The reason for this anomaly is not difficult to explain. First, realism is a 'hard sell': it does not sit easily with the dominant liberal values and mindset of modern Western societies. Second, realism has become increasingly marginalised and misunderstood in the European International Relations community, particularly in Britain which has become virtually a 'realist-free zone'.[5] Third, contemporary Europe is a 'hard case' for realism.[6] Neorealism has most obvious applicability to regional security systems characterised by a high level of security competition and great power rivalry, such as East Asia, South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East. It is less obviously suitable for analysing regional security systems – such as post-Cold War Europe – where there is a marked degree of great power cooperation and muted security competition. For these reasons, it is not surprising that most studies of the post-Cold War European security system have been influenced by liberal-idealist assumptions. Nonetheless, as this book will endeavour to demonstrate, realist international theory offers a powerful tool for elucidating both the dynamics of security competition in Europe and the elements of cooperation and governance that have emerged in the continent since the demise of Cold War bipolarity. Analysing the structural distribution of relative power cannot explain all the nuances and contingencies

of contemporary European security, but it can help identify the structural dynamics underlying the ebb and flow of events.

The central purpose of this book is to stimulate a more balanced debate on the future of the European security system by adding to it the hitherto marginalised voice of structural realism. In his concluding remarks to his essay *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Edmund Burke argued that his aim was to correct an imbalance in the debate on the meaning and significance of the 1789 revolution. His comments, he argued, came from one who, 'when the equipoise of the vessel in which he sails, may be endangered by overloading it upon one side, is desirous of carrying the small weight of his reasons to that which may preserve its equipose'.[7] This book is also an attempt to correct an imbalance – in this case on the international security implications of the 1989 revolutions in Europe. Its purpose is to preserve the equipoise of debate on European security by adding to it the much maligned and greatly misunderstood voice of realist international theory. In doing so, it seeks to open up space for discussion, not to close it down, thereby facilitating a more balanced 'conversation' on the future of European security.[8]

Realism's answer to the research puzzle outlined above is a bleak one, which jars uncomfortably with the dominant liberal consensus. Mainstream liberal opinion is that Europe is 'primed for peace'; that war, conflict, security competition and great power rivalry are things of the past; that a new age of international politics has dawned, characterised by institutionalised multilateral cooperation between democracies enmeshed in thickening webs of economic interdependence and sharing a common normative commitment to the peaceful resolution of disputes. At the heart of this emerging 'Kantian' perpetual peace order is the European Union, which liberals and idealists believe ensures peaceful cooperation between its member states.

In contrast to the Panglossian optimism of liberal-idealism, which this book challenges, Realism offers a much less sanguine view of the prospects for a durable peace order in Europe. 1989 was neither the 'end of history' nor the end of the balance of power and international politics as we know it. In the absence of an overarching sovereign authority able to ensure compliance with its decisions, the European security complex remains an anarchic self-help system, within which states must look to their own resources, or those of powerful allies, to safeguard their security and autonomy. States – especially great powers – remain the most important actors in this anarchic system, not international organisations like the EU or NATO. Europe's great powers continue to worry about their security and their power relative to their main rivals and competitors. Consequently, cooperation in multilateral institutions is often difficult because states worry about who benefits most from cooperative ventures: in the language of neorealist theory, they worry about relative rather than absolute gains.

Given the self-help nature of international politics in Europe, it is unwise to assume that peace in the continent is permanent and stable. Although security competition was muted in the 1990s, its underlying causes have not been

eradicated. Indeed, a certain level of rivalry and suspicion between states is inevitable in any anarchic, self-help system. This is because the best way for states to ensure their security is by amassing as much power as possible. Consequently, systemic pressures impel states (at least, states that act rationally) to pursue strategies aimed, in the first instance, at maximising their security, and ultimately, at maximising their power. A realist analysis of the structural distribution of relative power capabilities in Europe thus suggests that 'continental drift' in transatlantic relations is irreversible, whoever occupies the White House; that the 'German problem' has not been solved by democracy and unification; that Russia will remain a security competitor for Western powers, whatever course its domestic political evolution takes; that the EU is a product of bipolarity, and that the prospects for an 'ever closer union' in the context of multipolarity are, at best, limited; that an enlarged EU is not a 'civilian' or 'normative' power, and cannot serve as the institutional guarantor of a European peace; that NATO is destined for a greatly reduced role in Europe's security architecture; and that idealist notions that Europe's security can be based on soft power, shared normative values and 'security governance' are an illusion – and a dangerous illusion at that.

More generally, this book makes the realist case that democracy and multilateral institutions are no guarantee of a stable peace; that globalisation, economic interdependence and transnational societal exchanges are not leading to the 'withering away of the state'; and that nationalism has not been neutered or transcended, but remains a potent political force in Europe. Moreover, although the prospects of major war in Europe are slight, military capabilities remain a crucial currency of power in Europe's self-help system, shaping the broad contours of international politics within which most diplomatic and economic interactions are conducted. In short, the argument presented here is that Europe is not the 'post-modern' Kantian paradise of peace and plenty that both its detractors and advocates depict.[9]

Nonetheless, whilst Europe is not the Kantian *foedus pacificum* liberal-idealists believe it to be, neither is it 'primed for conflict' like East Asia or the Middle East. The central theme of this book is that the contemporary European security order is characterised by 'balanced multipolarity'. This analysis is not shared by all structural realists. Kenneth Waltz, for example, has argued that with the end of the Cold War, a form of 'modified bipolarity' has emerged. Bipolarity persists, he argues, 'but in an altered state', because 'militarily Russia can take care of itself'.[10] The argument here, which is based on an analysis of the structural distribution of power in the European security system, suggests otherwise. With the break-up of the Soviet Union and the political fragmentation of the 'West', it is argued, a multipolar order has emerged in Europe composed of five great powers: the USA, Russia, Germany, the UK and France. While the USA is a global hyperpower enjoying a 'unipolar' moment in the wider international system, it is not Europe's hegemon: at most it is *primus inter pares*, playing the role of 'off-shore balancer'.

Europe itself is, once again, multipolar. However, it has not experienced the multipolar instabilities and intense security competition predicted by John Mearsheimer in his seminal article 'Back to the Future'.[11] This is because Mearsheimer was exploring the scenario of a transition from bipolarity to 'unbalanced multipolarity', 'the most dangerous kind of power structure'.[12] In the contemporary European security system, however, neither Germany nor Russia (the two great powers most usually seen as having the potential for hegemonic ambitions) are strong enough to make a credible bid for continental supremacy. Rather, a rough equilibrium of relative power capabilities exists between Europe's five great powers. In the absence of a potential hegemon, the European security system is characterised by balanced multipolarity, similar to that which produced the Concert of Europe in the early nineteenth century. In the context of a rough equilibrium between Europe's great powers, the prospects for a degree of cooperation to address shared security concerns and for collective milieu-shaping are favourable. It is this structural arrangement of balanced multipolarity that shapes and shoves the post-Cold War European security system, and which generates the complex mix of cooperation and competition that characterises European international relations in the early twenty-first century.

II TURNING THE 'SOIL OF IGNORANCE'

Beyond the ephemera of 'events'

As noted above, this book has an ambitious aim: to delve beneath the surface play of events and to identify the structural pressures shaping and shoving the European security system. Doing so, however, raises a series of intractable epistemological issues about the best theoretical and conceptual 'tools' for 'turning the soil of ignorance'.[13]

If we seek to understand and explain the underlying nature of international politics, simply cataloguing and detailing events is insufficient. This is the fallacy of bare-footed empiricism: the belief that 'facts' speak for themselves. Empiricism is linked to the inductivist approach, which seeks to amass a wealth of empirical data from which a scientific theory can be induced. Empiricism is also part and parcel of the historical method. This involves eschewing the search for underlying patterns in favour of laying bare and reconstructing the unfolding sequence of events, whether far-distant or recent. Historians tend to emphasise the contingent, the specific and the unexpected, and are suspicious of attempts to identify causal relations or patterned behaviour.[14] The historical method thus involves peeling back and exposing ever more layers of complexity and detail, without ever looking for an 'essence'.[15]

The problems with empiricism and the historical method are twofold: first, one needs some criteria for selecting 'relevant' facts. Otherwise, the task of data

collection itself is impossible. Second, 'facts' do not speak for themselves. They can help identify causal relationships, but they do not explain *why* things happen. Accumulating impressive quantities of empirical data can provide the raw material for a rich narrative description of contemporary events, but this will not help us distinguish the wood from the trees. 'Events', the French historian Fernand Braudel has written, 'are the ephemera of history; they pass across its stage like fire-flies, hardly glimpsed before they settle back into darkness and as often as not, into oblivion.'[16]

The problems with empiricism are evident from even a cursory glance at the contradictory pattern of events since the end of the Cold War. During this period, Europe has experienced a series of ambiguous and contradictory events, some of which give grounds for cautious optimism, others which suggest a bleaker and more unsettled future. On the one hand, the end of the East–West conflict came about largely peacefully and consensually; German reunification took place through democratic elections and international agreement, rather than through 'blood and iron'; and the break-up of the Soviet Union largely avoided the bloodshed of the Bolshevik Revolution and its aftermath. In addition, the Maastricht Treaty on European Union led to the adoption of a single currency by 12 EU member states, and the new democracies of East Central Europe have largely achieved their goal of 'returning to Europe'. On the other hand, the end of the Cold War was followed by the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia; conflict and instability in a number of Soviet successor states; Russia's brutal war in Chechnya; divisions between 'old' and 'new' Europe over the Iraq War; a severe crisis in transatlantic relations; and the collapse of the much vaunted EU 'constitution'.

What are we to make of these often ambiguous and contradictory events? What do they tell us about the nature and motive forces of European security in the twenty-first century? Is Europe destined to become 'whole and free' with an 'ever closer union' at its core, or is it hopelessly divided and riven by competing interests? Is Europe 'primed for peace', or will it experience the multipolar instabilities and great power conflicts of the past? If events themselves offer no clear guidance about the nature and dynamics of contemporary European security, how can we analyse the European security system? Is it possible to delve beneath the surface play of events, discern underlying patterns to developments in Europe, and make informed judgements – however tentative and provisional – about the prospects for peace and cooperation in the continent?

The argument of this book is that it is indeed possible to understand – and more ambitiously – to *explain* the structural dynamics and patterned behaviour underlying the ephemera of events and the random play of happenstance. To do so we need to think theoretically and analytically about European security. At the same time, as we use the tools of deductive theory to 'turn the soil of ignorance', we need to be conscious of the analytical strengths and weaknesses of our chosen theoretical approach.[17]

The nature and purpose of theory

The purpose of theory is to provide us with a means of going beyond mere description and categorisation of events, and to explain *why* they happened. Its aim is thus to *explain*, not provide a rich and naturalistic description of reality. By its very nature, therefore, theory involves simplifying, abbreviating and abstracting reality – details are sacrificed for breadth, and descriptive accuracy for explanatory power.

Theory building involves a number of distinct tasks. The first task is to clearly define key terms and concepts with which to categorise data and map the relevant domain.[18] The second is to identifying key variables, in order to provide guidance for sifting through a limitless mass of empirical data and selecting the relevant data (as defined by the theory). The third stage is to develop a theoretical explanation for the processes or events under investigation. This is the most difficult and demanding task: it requires inspiration and, more often than not, a high degree of lateral thinking, for as Albert Einstein noted, in pure research 'imagination is more important than knowledge'.[19]

It is essential to note from the outset that a theory is designed to explain a particular set of phenomena. Its objective is not to explain everything, but rather to elucidate a few matters of consequence. Good theories are therefore elegant and parsimonious. They clearly specify what they seek to explain (the 'dependent variable'), and identify a few key variables that account for the phenomena under investigation (the independent variables). They should also account for factors that might affect the causal relationship (the intervening variables). By focusing on a specific research puzzle or issue, theories aim to shed light on a few important aspects of behaviour. Good theory is thus based on the principle of 'maximizing leverage', or 'explaining as much as possible with as little as possible'.[20] Effective leverage is best achieved by a high level of abstraction and a fairly general scientific proposition, rather than more specific and context-dependent case-studies.

If we wish to proceed from 'passive observer of world politics to that of an active theorist', James Rosenau and Mary Durfee note, we need some guidelines about how best to 'think theoretically'.[21] They make a range of suggestions, the most important of which are as follows: first, in order to think theoretically, one must assume that human affairs manifest some underlying patterns of ordered behaviour, rather than being the product of random, arbitrary and contingent fate. From this follows the second key principle: to think theoretically, one must be predisposed to ask about every event or observed phenomenon, 'of what is this an instance?'. Third, thinking theoretically means that one must be prepared to sacrifice detailed descriptions for broad observations. In other words, one must be willing to see the wood from the trees, and not to become captivated by the 'ephemera of events'. One must also be genuinely puzzled about international politics, and willing to think flexibly and creatively ('playfully' is the phrase they use) about them. Finally, one must be tolerant of ambiguity,

concerned about possibilities, distrustful of absolutes, and of course, most importantly of all – one must be constantly ready to be proven wrong.[22]

Parsimonious theory and the siren call of eclecticism

As we seek to 'turn the soil of ignorance' and go beyond the ephemera of events, there are many competing theoretical and conceptual tools on offer. The discipline of International Relations is exceptionally diverse and multifaceted, comprising a mosaic of different theories and approaches, many of which defy easy categorisation. The most widely accepted categorisation of International Relations theory is that of Maurice Wight's 'three traditions': Radicalism, Liberalism and Realism.[23] The radical tradition remains the smallest but possibly the most disparate of three; nonetheless, it continues to punch above its weight, and to generate work of considerable interest and merit.

The main divide in the discipline is between Realism and Liberalism. These two voices have dominated the conversation of International Relations for most of its history, and the debate between them continues to provide the central front in the paradigm wars within the discipline. In Reinhold Niebuhr's terms, Realists are the 'children of darkness' who tend to emphasise power, competition and conflict, whereas Liberals are 'children of light', emphasising cooperation, harmony and moral suasion.[24] For some, realism and liberalism are the Siamese twins of the discipline, each elucidating a particular aspect of a complex reality. Consequently, there have been repeated calls for a synthesis of the two, or at the very least, a more eclectic and 'perspectivist' approach that avoids putting all one's theoretical eggs in one basket.[25]

Arguments for an eclectic 'pick 'n mix' approach to theory are superficially appealing, but such siren calls should be resisted. As Max Weber argued in 1904, we should 'struggle relentlessly against the self-deception which asserts that through the synthesis of several party points of view . . . practical norms of scientific validity can be arrived at'.[26] Progress in explaining international politics has come about through vigorous debate between contending theoretical perspectives. One of the few things John Mearsheimer and Ken Booth agree on is that healthy struggle between rival theories is beneficial for the discipline of International Politics.[27] This is not because of a misguided belief that any one theory holds the key to unlocking the mysteries of the universe, let alone the complexities of international politics. No single theory can answer all the questions in international politics, or provide a rich and comprehensive analysis of world affairs. The best that one can hope for is that a single theory sheds light on some – hopefully important – aspects of a bounded domain (in this case, the international system). The relative explanatory power of competing theories can best be ascertained by examining their logical coherence and their ability to explain empirical puzzles. This task is not helped by blurring their differences and diluting their parsimony.

If one aspires primarily to descriptive accuracy, then eclecticism and

perspectivism may be helpful: descriptive accuracy involves adding layers of complexity and nuance, and emphasising the contingent and unique. However, if one seeks to explain rather than simply describe, one needs theory, and good theory is necessarily parsimonious: it involves abstraction and simplification, not descriptive accuracy. Moreover, eclecticism and perspectivism are parasitic intellectual activities: they are only possible because of the efforts of those working in distinct paradigms or theoretical traditions, who contribute to cumulative knowledge on the basis of a distinct tradition of enquiry, and who specify their concepts and inferences. As Rosenau and Durfee note, a paradigmatic commitment involves the dangers of 'combative instincts' and fears about being 'entrapped in a conceptual jail of one's own making'. Nonetheless, the higher rungs of theorising do help bring coherence into all that we observe in international politics. A clear paradigmatic commitment gives us the ability to identify key questions and develop an approach with which to begin seeking answers to them;

> Without a self-conscious paradigmatic commitment, one is destined for endless confusion, for seeing everything as relevant and thus being unable to tease meaning out of the welter of events, situations, trends, and circumstances that make up international affairs at any and every moment in time. Without a readiness to rely on the interlocking premises of a particular paradigm, our efforts at understanding would be, at best, transitory, and at worst they would be arbitrary, filled with gaping holes and glaring contradictions.[28]

III REALIST INTERNATIONAL THEORY

Realism and *scientia*

This book is based on a self-conscious paradigmatic commitment to the Realist tradition of international political theory. More specifically, it draws on 'structural realism', which provides the foundations for a theoretical explanation of international politics, based on an analysis of the structural distribution of relative power capabilities in the international system. Within structural realism, there are significant differences between 'defensive' realists like Kenneth Waltz who argue that states are primarily security maximisers and therefore status quo orientated, and 'offensive' realists like John Mearsheimer who maintain that states are both security and power maximisers, because the best way to ensure a state's security is maximising its power relative to its rivals. The analysis presented here draws primarily on offensive realism, although it argues that a great power's choice of security or power maximisation strategy depends on the prevailing structural distribution of power and the opportunities afforded by the dynamics of the international system.

Realism is a distinctive tradition within the academic discipline of International Relations, one with a long and distinguished intellectual pedigree. A tradition of political thought, Michael Oakeshott has written, is defined by the fact that 'it belongs to the nature of a tradition to tolerate and unite an internal variety, not insisting upon conformity to a single character, and because, further, it has the ability to change without losing its identity'. It is characteristic of political philosophers, he also notes, 'that they take a sombre view of the human situation: they deal in darkness';

> Human life in their writings appears, generally, not as a feast or even as journey, but as a predicament; and the link between politics and eternity is the contribution the political order is conceived as making to the deliverance of mankind. . . . Every masterpiece of political philosophy springs from a new vision of the predicament; each is the glimpse of a deliverance or the suggestion of a remedy.[29]

Realism is very much a tradition of political philosophy in Oakeshottian terms: it is both internally diverse, and takes a sombre view of the human situation. Realists are Niebuhr's 'Children of Darkness', who tend to emphasise the constraints on human progress placed by human nature and/or international anarchy. The intellectual roots of this tradition can be traced back through Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Thomas Hobbes and Machiavelli to Thucydides and the fifth-century BC Sophists. As a tradition of thought, Realism is at one and the same time a philosophical mood or disposition; a form of practical knowledge concerned with the principles of statecraft; and a social scientific research paradigm. As a *philosophical mood*, Realism is characterised by a profound scepticism of Enlightenment liberalism's optimistic belief in progress, and has a more pessimistic view of human nature.[30] It emphasises the irreducible element of tragedy in the human condition, and expects the worst from people and their states, given the propensity for individual selfishness and egotism (a view rooted in the Christian notion of original sin). As a form of what Oakeshott called 'practical knowledge', Realism has been concerned to elucidate some *principles of statecraft* for the 'modern prince'/nation-state. Classical realists like Machiavelli, Morgenthau, Carr and Kissinger drew heavily on the history of European diplomacy in order to elaborate a set of policy guidelines characterised by an emphasis on *Realpolitik* and an eschewal of moralism in foreign policy.

Whatever its utility as a philosophical mood and guide to statecraft, Realism's most important contribution to the academic study of international politics has been as a form of 'scientific knowledge' (*scientia*). Whereas 'practical knowledge' is concerned with how we can affect and change the world in order to meet our needs and desires, 'scientific knowledge' seeks to understand the world 'in respect of its independence of our hopes and desires, preferences and ambitions'. It involves 'constructing and exploring a rational world of related concepts to which every image recognized to be a relevant "fact" in the

idiom of this inquiry is given a place and an interpretation'. *Scientia*, or this 'impulse for rational understanding', 'exists only where this impulse is cultivated for its own sake unhindered by the intrusion of desire for power or prosperity'.[31]

Although a number of classical realists were concerned to go beyond philosophic mood and policy advice in order to develop 'scientific knowledge', it is only really with the publication of Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* that realism acquired the theoretical sophistication and analytical tools for explaining – rather than simply describing – international politics.[32] Waltz's great achievement was in developing a parsimonious and deductive theory that established neorealism as a distinctive research paradigm able to generate cumulative knowledge.[33] In so doing, he produced a 'Copernican revolution' in international political theory by 'showing how much of states' actions and interactions, and how much of the outcomes their actions and interactions produce, can be explained by forces that operate at the level of the system, rather than at the level of the units'.[34]

The defining feature of neorealist international theory is that it is a 'systemic', rather than a 'reductionist', theory. Classical realism, and most liberal theories of International Relations, seek to account for international outcomes such as war or international cooperation by examining domestic level (or 'second image') factors such as a regime type, domestic interests or party ideology. Prime examples include the 'democratic peace' hypothesis, which posits that democracies do not fight other democracies because of their endogenous, unit-level attributes, or explanations of the 'German problem' that focus on the German national character. Such second image theorising is 'reductionist' in the sense that it seeks 'to explain international outcomes through elements and combinations of elements located at national or subnational levels'.[35] The problem with reductionist theory is that, by focusing exclusively on unit-level attributes, it overlooks exogenous influences acting on the units. Consequently, it cannot account for the fact that state preferences rarely result in the desired international outcomes.

Realist international theory, as formulated by Kenneth Waltz, is 'systemic' in the sense that it seeks explanations for international outcomes at the level of international system, rather than at that of individual actors. Waltz argued that although state behaviour is self-evidently a consequence of both systemic pressures and domestic political preferences, his theory of international politics was a parsimonious one which focused on the systemic level because this was the least understood, and the one about which there were most misconceptions.[36] John Mearsheimer has sought to develop realist theory so that it can account for both *outcomes* and *behaviour*.[37] Nonetheless, systemic theory does not aspire to explain the specific foreign-policy decision-making processes of individual states. Rather, it seeks to explain recurrent patterns of behaviour over time. It does so by addressing two separate but related questions: (a) how the structural distribution of relative power capabilites 'shapes and shoves' the behaviour of

the units in the system; and (b) how structural, or systemic-level factors, influence the nature and composition of units, i.e. how their domestic structures are shaped by system level ('third image') factors – or what is sometimes called 'second image reversed'.

Neorealism's theory of international politics is based on the conviction that there is an underlying order in human affairs that gives rise to patterned behaviour. It provides a sophisticated set of analytical tools for identifying these broad patterns of international behaviour, above all, the systemic causes of war and conditions of peace. Realists draw a distinction between the domestic and international realms on the grounds that the former is organised hierarchically, the latter anarchically. These different ordering principles give rise to different structural dynamics between the primary actors. Having specified the specific domain to which the theory applies (the international system), Realism focuses on the key independent variable: the distribution of relative power capabilities. The structural distribution of power is thus identified as the primary factor 'shaping and shoving' foreign and security policy decision-making. Realism also assumes that state behaviour

> is largely shaped by the *material* structure of the international system. The distribution of material capabilities among states is the key factor for understanding world politics. For realists, some level of security competition among great powers is inevitable because of the material structure of the international system.[38]

Parsimony and positivism

At this point, it is appropriate to pre-empt two standard criticisms of neorealism. The first is that neorealist theory simplifies the complexities of international politics and focuses only on a few key variables. To this the plea can only be: guilty as charged. Like all good theory, neorealism aims at parsimony, elegance and 'maximum leverage'. It thus explicitly simplifies and abstracts reality in order to focus on a limited number of key variables. 'Explanatory power', Waltz notes, 'is gained by moving away from "reality", not by staying close to it. A full description would be of least explanatory power; an elegant theory, of most.'[39]

A neorealist analysis does not pretend to provide a comprehensive and all-encompassing explanation of international politics in all its complexity and detail, nor can it elucidate contingent or exceptional events. What Realism does provide is a set of tools for explaining theoretically the broad structural dynamics of international politics, and the regularities and repetitions of behaviour. John Mearsheimer likens neorealism to a 'powerful flashlight in a dark room': it provides an invaluable tool for navigating through the darkness, but it cannot illuminate every nook and cranny.[40] For this, more fine-grained, 'middle-range' theories are necessary to supplement neorealism: these can add detail and texture to the broad outlines illuminated by neorealism's general theory.

Kenneth Waltz has argued that a parsimonious and deductive theory like neorealism can only ever seek to cast light on a few, hopefully important, questions. International political theory can elucidate the structural pressures that 'shape and shove' behaviour of key actors in the European security system. Structural realism is not a deterministic theory, and cannot explain all aspects of state behaviour, because in an anarchic realm states 'are free to do any fool thing they choose'. Nonetheless, he adds, it remains a powerful analytical tool for explaining international politics because states 'are likely to be rewarded for behaviour that is responsive to structural pressures and punished for behaviour that is not'.[41] Waltz explicitly refers to the example of post-war West European integration to 'show what a theory of international politics can and cannot tell us':

> It can describe the range of likely outcomes of the actions and interactions of states within a given system and show how the range of expectations varies as systems change. It can tell us what pressures are exerted and what possibilities are posed by systems of different structure, but it cannot tell us just how, and how effectively, the units of a system will respond to those pressures and possibilities.[42]

The second oft-repeated criticism of neorealism is that it is 'positivist'. This fallacy derives from a simplistic equation of 'positivism' with any attempt to develop a social science theory.[43] Positivism as a philosophy of science is a variant of John Locke's empiricism, which claims that all knowledge is obtained from human sensory experience, and is therefore rooted in inductive reasoning. Positivism posits that appearances, not realities, are the only objects of knowledge, and that therefore one cannot make reference to generative structures and mechanisms underlying observed phenomena.[44] Neorealism, however, is based on deductive reasoning, and focuses on systemic pressures rooted in the underlying structure of international politics. It shares with critical realism a commitment to 'depth ontology'; in other words, a belief that theory is needed to go beyond the surface play of events and examine the structural reality beneath.[45] Waltz himself denied that his was a positivist theory, and argued that a theory, 'though related to the world about which explanations are wanted, always remains distinct from that world. "Reality" will be congruent neither with a theory nor with a model that may represent it'.[46]

IV SUMMARY OF MAIN THEMES

Structure of the book

This book is a theoretically informed and empirically rich analysis of the European security system. It comprises nine chapters. This introductory chapter has sought to introduce the research puzzle and make explicit the epistemological

premises and ontological foundations of the neorealist theoretical enterprise. Chapter 2 provides a critical exposition of liberal perspectives on the end of the Cold War and the future of European security. It argues that liberal-idealism is ill-equipped to explain the dynamics of international politics, primarily because it misunderstands the nature of power and underestimates its importance for relations between states.

Chapter 3 summarises the main tenets of neorealist theory; outlines its theoretical assumptions; and defines key concepts such as 'power', 'international order', 'great powers' and 'grand strategy'. Realist international theory, it is argued, provides a set of analytical tools for explaining both systemic outcomes and the foreign policy behaviour of major powers. The chapter also argues that Machiavelli's allegory of the Centaur – 'half-beast and half-man' – provides a useful image for capturing the blend of coercion and cooperation that characterises order in self-help international systems.

Chapter 4 provides a bridge to the more empirically orientated chapters of this book. It begins by defining Europe and then examines the distinctive structural attributes of the European security system. These include: the exceptional diversity and dynamism of Europe's anarchical states' system; the impact of security competition on the formation and development of the nation-state; and the significance of the different power configurations for the outbreak of major wars and for periods of great power cooperation. The chapter concludes by examining the implications of the changing structural distribution of power associated with Cold War bipolarity and its demise.

The subsequent four chapters provide empirically-rich analyses of the crucial aspects of the European security system, each of which examines the grand strategies of Europe's great powers and their responses to balanced multipolarity. Chapter 5 considers the implications of unipolarity for American grand strategy, focusing on the United States' role in Europe's multipolar security system and the future trajectory of transatlantic relations. It argues that US grand strategy is best explained by the deductive logic of 'offensive' rather than 'defensive' realism, and that this is reflected by shifts in US policy towards NATO since the end of the Cold War. The chapter concludes by suggesting that the process of 'continental drift' will be accompanied by a more differentiated pattern of transatlantic relations characterised by multiple bilateralism.

Chapter 6 focuses on Western Europe's two great powers, Britain and France, and examines the influence of geography on their very different responses to balanced multipolarity. It also provides a neorealist analysis of the EU, focusing on its origins in bipolarity, and its role as an instrument of collective milieu-shaping and a repository of the 'second order' normative concerns of its member states.

Chapter 7 examines Germany – Europe's *Zentralmacht* ('central power'). Germany has long provided the fulcrum for the European balance of power, and has been regarded by some as a potential superpower and 'Fourth Reich'. Germany, this chapter argues, re-learnt its old great power role in the 1990s, and

with the transition from the Bonn to the Berlin Republic, has lost its 'reflexive multilateralism' and 'civilian power' instincts. Nonetheless, Germany is neither a potential hegemon nor a 'Fourth Reich', but a 'normal' great power. Given its relative power capabilities and its central geographical location, Germany is destined to play a pivotal role in Europe's balanced multipolarity in the early twenty-first century.

Chapter 8 considers Russia and Eastern Europe. If Germany was the clear winner from the end of the Cold War, Russia was the looser. Nonetheless, Russia remains a Eurasian great power, with a continuing influence on the European security system. This chapter examines the impact of the structural distribution of power on the geopolitics of Eastern Europe, and Russia's role in the shifting diplomatic alignments that are characteristic of balanced multipolarity. Given its relative power capabilities and the structural pressures of a self-help system, Russia will be neither friend nor enemy to the West, but will continue to pursue a prickly pragmatism that combines cooperation in certain areas with security competition in others. In the early twenty-first century, Ukraine is likely to be the focus of growing security competition between the Western powers and a resurgent Russia.

The concluding chapter picks up some of the theoretical and analytical issues raised by the preceding empirically-based chapters. Entitled 'Realism, Tragedy and Ethics', it assesses the strengths and weaknesses of realist international theory, and outlines areas for future theoretical reflection and empirical research. More ambitiously, it addresses claims that structural realism is an amoral, if not immoral, approach to international politics – a claim that does not stand up to close scrutiny. Moving beyond the parsimony of neorealism, the concluding argument draws on the work of Michael Oakeshott and Reinhold Niebuhr to argue that realist international theory provides solid foundations for a 'non-teleological ethics' with which to make foreign and security policy choices in an anarchic self-help system.

2

LIBERALISM AND THE END OF THE COLD WAR

> It was the best of times, it was the worst of times; it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way.
>
> Charles Dickens, *A Tale of Two Cities*

This chapter offers a critique of the dominant liberal-idealist discourse which has shaped much of the debate on European security since the end of the Cold War. It critically analyses claims that the demise of Cold War bipolarity has resulted in the transcendence of power politics, security competition and the balance of power in Europe, and that the continent is now 'primed for peace'. Such claims were also advanced in the inter-war years after the 'war to end all wars', but liberal dreams that 'the world's grown honest' were as illusory then as they are today. Liberalism has proven a poor guide to understanding international security, it is argued, primarily because it misunderstands the nature of power. Liberal-idealists also tend to have an unduly optimistic view of globalisation; to over-estimate the importance of multilateral institutions; and to commit the reductionist fallacy of privileging domestic political forms over systemic pressures. Above all, liberal-idealists have a normative political agenda that leads them to confuse what *is* with what *ought to be*. Consequently, this chapter concludes that liberalism is ill-equipped to explain theoretically the complex patterns of cooperation and conflict that characterises Europe's post-Cold War balanced multipolarity.

1989: the 'end of history'?

When asked to evaluate the significance of the 1789 French Revolution, the Chinese Communist leader Chou En Lai is reputed to have replied that it was

too early to say.[1] Given Chou's reticence to evaluate the importance of an event that took place one and a half centuries earlier, it may perhaps seem somewhat premature to pronounce judgement on the significance of the *annus mirabilis* of 1989 – an event that took place a mere decade and a half ago. Yet the dust from the shattered Berlin Wall had barely settled, and the ink scarcely dried on the CSCE 'Paris Charter for a New Europe', before commentators had drawn far-reaching conclusions from the demise of Cold War bipolarity. For a minority, the passing of the East–West conflict was the occasion for maudlin musings about the end of an era of moral clarity and political purpose. Others worried about the risks of a renationalisation of defence policy and the advent of multipolar instability. John Mearsheimer – the lone voice of neorealist pessimism – suggested that post-Cold War Europe might be fated to return 'back to the future', a future of security competition and great power rivalry reminiscent of the early twentieth century.[2] For the overwhelming majority of commentators, however, the demise of the Cold War was the cause for unalloyed celebration and joy, signifying no less than the 'End of History',[3] the dawn of a 'new world order' and the advent of a Europe 'whole and free'. The passing of the Cold War, the optimists argued, signified the welcome end to millennia of European history marked by conflict, violence and bloodshed, and the dawn of a new, liberal age.

The course of events during the heady days of 1989–90 certainly gave credence to the infectious optimism of the early nineties. For the first time ever, fundamental revisions to the established political, economic and strategic order came about without major war or violent revolution. An 'evil empire' collapsed, the Warsaw Pact disintegrated and the long-suffering peoples of Eastern Europe regained their sovereignty and independence. Germany was reunited, not by 'blood and iron', but peacefully through the ballot box and on the basis of international agreement; the EU launched an ambitious programme of deepening the integration process to achieve an 'ever closer union'; and the new democracies of the post-communist East embarked on their 'return to Europe'. NATO offered the 'hand of friendship' to the Soviet Union, and, when the latter disintegrated, to Russia and the other Soviet successor states. Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan agreed to return their nuclear weapons to Russia, averting the immediate threat of inadvertent proliferation. Across Europe, the public eagerly awaited their promised 'peace dividend', as defence budgets were slashed and military forces withdrawn from Central Europe.[4] For the third time in the century, a US president proclaimed the dawn of a new era in international relations.

For many commentators, what happened in 1989–91 was not just the geostrategic reshaping of the European map, but something much more profound. 'History' itself had ended, Frances Fukuyama famously argued, with a clear and unequivocal win for liberal democracy. The future promised to be peaceful, although somewhat dull – a consequence of what he termed the 'common marketization of international relations'.[5] Even if 'History' as such had not ended, many were convinced that at the very least, a whole era of

European history had ended. The end of the Cold War, it was argued, was a profound and irreversible watershed, signifying nothing less than the end of international politics as we have known it. For some, the demise of the East–West conflict sounded not just the death-knell of the 'Europe of Yalta' and the disintegration of the 'Europe of Versailles', but the end of the 'order of Westphalia' – i.e. 'the idea of a system based on territoriality and the sovereignty of states'.[6]

After centuries of war, conflict and great power rivalry, many claimed, *Realpolitik* and the balance of power had been consigned to Trotsky's 'dustbin of history'. A new liberal consensus quickly formed amongst mainstream historians and political scientists that although security competition, great power rivalry, the security dilemma and the balance of power might have characterised international politics in the centuries up to 1989, with the end of the Cold War these Realist categories no longer applied.[7] Nineteen eighty-nine thus constituted – if not the end of history *per se* – then certainly the end of international political history. 'What happened in 1989', the former British diplomat Robert Cooper subsequently wrote, 'was not just the cessation of the Cold War, but also the end of the balance-of-power system in Europe.'[8]

If, as many believed, the demise of the Cold War marked the end of the Westphalian states' system and thus of international politics as we have known it, then old and established theories of International Relations – especially those that served so well during the previous centuries of war and great power rivalry (above all realism) – were now redundant. In the singular argot of the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, they were 'OBE' ('overtaken by events'). Inspired by optimistic hopes that a brave new world was being born, many academics embarked on the search for new paradigms and theories with which to apprehend this new world order. Concepts like security were re-examined and redefined as part of the quest for more innovative approaches to the study of international politics. As a consequence of this thirst for viable alternatives to realism, the English School enjoyed a renaissance; critical theory blossomed; and postmodernism found eager disciples. Issues of epistemology, ontology and methodology were also endlessly examined and debated, and a new 'post-positivist' perspective emerged, with a plethora of adherents. Culture and identity also returned to the discipline with a vengeance.[9] By the late 1990s, 'social constructivism' – the self-styled *via media* between rationalism and reflexivism – had assumed a central position within liberal-idealist approaches to International Relations.[10]

The liberal *Zeitgeist* had a particularly pernicious effect on the field of International Security Studies, weakening its conceptual coherence and substantive focus. It has long been recognised – even by realists – that security is more than national security and the military balance. However, the concept of 'security' has been broadened to such an extent that it now seems to be about anything but state security, coercive power and military force; security has now been variously redefined in terms of 'human security', 'environmental security', 'societal

security', 'soft security' or 'security governance'. Indeed, the concept of security has been so broadened and deepened by liberals and critical theorists that it is in danger of becoming coterminous with the domain of 'international relations' generally – absorbing health, environment, quality of life, life chances, global poverty and all.[11] Adherents of 'Critical Security Studies' have sought to define security in eschatological terms as 'emancipation' – a term as vague as it is contested.[12] In short, security for liberal-idealists is now about everything – and nothing. Security Studies has become, in the words of the seventeenth-century mathematician Blaise Pascal, a 'fearful sphere whose centre is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere'. Likewise, 'strategy' has been stripped of its association with military power, and now serves as a synonym for 'policy'.[13] In the liberal-idealist *Weltanschauung*, therefore, security and strategy have become increasingly separated from power, leading to the illusion that security can be achieved through a reliance on 'soft power', governance, moral suasion and 'transparency'.

The engine of transformation is widely regarded as being 'globalisation'. Globalisation, it is argued, is the *deus ex machina* that has blurred the distinction between domestic and international politics to such an extent that security 'governance' is now possible, based on 'heterarchy', soft power and consensus.[14] Globalisation is also credited with having shaped a 'post-modern system' in Europe, in which borders are irrelevant, sovereignty no longer matters and force has been rejected as a way of settling disputes. In this Kantian idyll, great powers are no longer preoccupied by the balance of power, and security can be achieved through 'transparency' and 'interdependence'.[15] With the reputed blurring of the distinction between domestic and international politics by the invisible hand of globalisation, the search is now on for new models of 'cosmopolitan democracy'.[16] After a century of *Realpolitik*, assertive nationalism, total war, the Holocaust and MAD, liberals thus argue, Europe has learnt from its past errors, and pioneered innovative forms of peaceful multilateral cooperation.[17] The past is a foreign country, and Europe today is steadily building a Kantian *foedus pacificum* ('pacific union'), in which soft power, multilateralism and shared interests will ensure peace, security and prosperity for all.

Liberal dreams: 'the world's grown honest'

The demise of the Cold War provided an enormous fillip to liberal dreams of a peaceful and cooperative world. Liberalism is one of the great products of that revolution in intellectual affairs known as the 'Enlightenment'. It is a broad and diverse philosophy, united less by a core set of doctrinal tenets than by a series of Wittgensteinian 'family resemblances'. One of its distinguishing features is its optimistic view of human affairs, grounded in a belief in the inevitability of progress. Another is its faith in reason and scientific rationality, and in the power of moral suasion and social pedagogy, another legacy of Enlightenment thinking. Liberals also tend to have a more positive view of human nature than

conservatives or realists, and a faith in the perfectibility of social arrangements. For liberals, war and conflict are inherently 'unnatural', an aberration from 'normal' politics which, they believe, are based on an underlying harmony of interests. Acute conflict, particularly war, is thus the consequence, either of irresponsible and undemocratic leaders pursuing illegitimate goals, or of misperception and misunderstanding – mistakes, in a word. Liberalism thus tends to be associated with 'progressivist' political movements, and contains a strong element of idealist thinking.[18]

The spectacular events of the annus mirabilis greatly enhanced the influence of liberalism on the academic study of International Relations: liberal values and assumptions now pervade most mainstream approaches to the discipline. This reflects broader cultural and political shifts which have diffused liberal attitudes throughout European politics and society. The strengthening of this liberal Zeitgeist means that the dominant political discourse in European affairs is, more than ever, a liberal discourse.[19] In the heartlands of the EU, the goal of a Kantian peace order is now widely viewed as a realistic and achievable goal. Few European or North American leaders talk of security competition or the balance of power, or even acknowledge its existence. Democratic peace theory has become the common sense of our age. The idea of an 'ethical foreign policy' has shaped the discourse of Europe's leaders, and human rights have been invoked to justify wars against sovereign states.[20] The official discourse has been underpinned by academic arguments in favour of humanitarian intervention, European integration and 'soft power' – more often than not, accompanied by ritual denunciations of 'realism', especially 'neorealism'. It is as if a Gramscian 'Historic Bloc' has emerged in Europe, complete with its own 'organic intellectuals' from the International Relations community, committed to preaching the virtues of integration, cosmopolitanism and Western values. These organic intellectuals provide the backing vocals for the dominant liberal discourse, contributing to the constructed ideational consensus that underpins the existing distribution of power and authority in European societies.[21]

We live, it seems, in a liberal era. *Raison d'état* and the 'amorality of Machiavelli have been replaced by a moral consciousness that applies to international relations as well as to domestic affairs', it is claimed, and why?: because 'the world's grown honest'.[22] For liberal-idealists, this happy state of affairs is the product both of rational political agents acting strategically on the basis of conscious design, and more deep-seated processes of social and economic change. The three key political transformations are: the spread and consolidation of democracy (or what Kant termed 'republican governments'), which is credited with having created a 'democratic peace'; national self-determination, which is seen as providing solid foundations for governments based on popular consent and national legitimacy; and institutionalised multilateral cooperation (most notably, in the shape of the European Union), which is seen as facilitating cooperation through sharing information and reducing the element of friction in diplomacy. These conscious strategic choices are facilitated by underlying

secular trends which are contributing to the inexorable emergence of a more integrated and harmonious world order, based on cosmopolitan values and principles. The two key sets of impersonal forces are: deepening interdependence in an increasingly globalised economy; and transnational social transactions and exchanges, which generate a sense of 'we-ness' that transforms identities and political allegiances.[23]

Mainstream liberal opinion assumes that Europe has indeed changed, and changed for the better. Kant's dream of a *foedus pacificum* may not yet have been realised in full, it is argued, but Europe has moved substantially in that direction. War is now unthinkable between European states; nationalism has been tamed by the emergence of multiple identities; states are 'now kinder, gentler things than they used to be', organised 'at least as much to provide justice as order or security'; and Europe's electorates are now more concerned with 'wealth and welfare rather than warfare'.[24] International anarchy may not have been ended by the emergence of a global or regional Leviathan, but its competitive logic has been mitigated by pooled sovereignty, porous borders, multi-level governance, multilateral institutions, economic interdependence and transnational societal integration.[25] Power politics, it is claimed, has been superseded by what Fukuyama termed the 'common marketisation of international relations', and the balance of power by a cooperative security community of like-minded democracies.

Déjà vu all over again?

The problem with this liberal *Weltanschauung* is that we have been here before. In the wake of the Great War of 1914–18 a similar mood of infectious optimism blossomed throughout Europe and North America.[26] And once again, liberalism provided the dominant ethos of the age, pervading the rhetoric of world leaders, and establishing a position of near hegemony in academic circles. In 1919 as in 1989, an American President promised a new era in international politics free from the machinations of great power politics and the balance of power. 'There must be, not a balance of power', President Woodrow Wilson argued, 'but a community of power; not organized rivalries, but an organised common peace.'[27]

The stable peace order which was to follow the 'war to end all wars' was to be constructed on the basis of international justice, replacing the immorality of 'might is right'. Realpolitik and Machiavellian amoralism were to be superseded by a new moral consciousness, based on Woodrow Wilson's 'Fourteen Points'.[28] Peace was to be achieved by the creation of legitimate nation-states (founded on the principle of national self-determination); the strengthening of international law; open trade and economic exchange; and institutionalised multilateral diplomacy. The lynch-pin of this new liberal order was the League of Nations, the instrument through which international anarchy was to be ameliorated, nationalism tamed and peace secured. Aspirations for a stable European peace were

encouraged by the Locarno Pact of 1925, which settled Germany's western borders, and the 1928 Kellogg–Briand Pact, which – more ambitiously – condemned and renounced the recourse to war as an instrument of national policy or a solution to international disputes.[29]

Throughout this period, what was striking was the extent to which the belief in the efficacy of international law and multilateral institutions clouded the judgement of policy-makers in many European countries, despite growing evidence to the contrary. 'I cannot recall any time', Winston Churchill noted in 1932, 'when the gap between the kind of words which statesmen used and what was actually happening in many countries was so great as it is now.'[30] Liberal illusions were rooted in the belief that international peace and stability depended, not on a balance of power between major states, but on international law, institutions and goodwill. Yet the Locarno Treaty itself was a prime example of the workings of power politics and an illustration of the importance of a balance of power as a prerequisite for international peace and cooperation. As E.H. Carr noted, the Treaty only became possible at the 'psychological moment when French fear of Germany was about equally balanced by Germany's fear of France', and when 'the power interests of Great Britain coincided with those of Germany':

> The history of Locarno is a classic instance of power politics. It remains incomprehensible to those who seek uniform *a priori* solutions of the problem of security, and regard power politics as an abnormal phenomenon visible only in periods of crisis.[31]

Liberal approaches to the problems of European security at official level were matched by the spread of liberal-idealist and 'progressivist' thinking in universities and foreign policy think tanks. The trauma of the First World War led to the establishment of the first chair in International Relations (the Woodrow Wilson Chair at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, in 1919), and the foundation of a number of foreign policy research institutes, most notably Chatham House.[32] The objective of these and similar initiatives was to encourage thinking about how war could be prevented and world peace secured (this was certainly the explicit aim of the philanthropic millionaires like Montague Burton, Andrew Carnegie and David Davies who financed the new discipline of International Relations).[33]

These were laudable ambitions: the problem, however, was that the solutions they sought to the problem of war were drawn from a narrow school of liberal thought, rooted in the Enlightenment tradition of optimism about the prospects for progress based on the faculty of human reason.[34] In order to avoid what they regarded as the mistakes of the past, they largely ignored realist approaches to international politics, despite the richness of the intellectual tradition from which they derived. Turning their backs on realism, they emphasised the importance of international law and international institutions; the contingency of historical

change and the prospects for progress; the power of reason, persuasion and goodwill; and the prospects for peaceful, progressive change based on human rationality, enlightened self-interest and an underlying harmony of interests.

The similarities between both official and academic thinking about international politics in the periods after the First World War and the Cold War are striking: in both, there was strong belief that a profound historical watershed was underway, and that a new – and better – age of international relations was dawning. After both the Great War and the Cold War, the end of the balance of power and security competition was proclaimed, along with the birth of a 'new' pattern of international politics based on multilateral institutions, the rule of law and moral rectitude. Then as now, liberal-idealists argued that these would guarantee a new liberal age characterised by stable peace and international cooperation. The problem with these liberal prescriptions for international peace and security are two-fold.

First, the problem of 'presentism'.[35] This is the belief that contemporary developments constitute a profound and irrevocable *caesura* in the intricately woven tapestry of political and social relations – a moment in which '[a]ll that is solid melts into air', and '[a]ll fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify'.[36] Presentism is a perennial conceit, and to which academics – like journalists – are particularly prone. The reason is not hard to understand: if we are living through events of profound historical significance, then what we have to say becomes even more important and novel. Presentism was rife after the Great War, as it was after the Cold War. Clearly, both periods witnessed significant elements of change in European politics, characterised by the collapse of existing structures of domestic political authority in much of Central and Eastern Europe, and a consequent reordering of diplomatic and strategic relations across the continent. Yet neither the First World War or the end of the Cold War transformed the international system from an anarchic 'self-help' system to a hierarchic and rule-based 'post-Westphalian' order. The task for International Relations theory, therefore, is to identify the elements of continuity and change associated with moments of great drama and upheaval.

The second problem, common to both the interwar years and to the post-Cold War era, is the tendency to overlook or downplay the significance of power. In the preface to the second edition of his seminal work, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, E.H. Carr wrote that his aim in writing the book – one of the few real classics of British International Relations, and a book which 'leaves us nowhere to hide'[37] – was to counteract 'the glaring and dangerous defect of nearly all thinking, both academic and popular, about international politics in English-speaking countries from 1919 to 1939 – the almost total neglect of the factor of power'.[38] By 1945, he continued, this defect had 'to a considerable extent' been overcome. In the 1990s, however, it resurfaced in a particularly acute form, fuelled by the optimism and idealism that followed the *annus mirabilis* of 1989.

Liberalism and the 'new world *disorder*'

The problem for liberal-idealists, however, is that their hopes for a 'new world order' and a postmodern Europe 'whole and free' have not been borne out by developments since the demise of bipolarity. The 'events' that so concerned Harold Macmillan have not been kind to liberal-idealists and their dreams of a 'world grown honest'. The most salient event that first punctured liberal illusions about post-Cold War Europe was the violent break-up of Yugoslavia. Despite hubristic claims that 'the hour of Europe' had come,[39] the EU – the lynchpin of Europe's post-modern system of soft security – proved singularly inept at dealing with the problems of violent conflict. The reassertion of a nationalism 'red in tooth and claw' was hard to square with the idea of a 'post-national' Europe, and the liberal mind-set proved tragically unsuited to deal with the claims of competing ethno-national communities seeking national self-determination and their own sovereign statehood.

It is also striking, in the light of liberal-idealist hopes for peace, that the 1990s began and ended with two major wars – Operation Desert Storm in Iraq and Operation Allied Force in Kosovo. Indeed, the paradox of the post-Cold War world is that despite the ending of the East–West conflict and with it the threat of nuclear Armageddon, Europe's armed forces have, more than ever, been actively engaged in a wide range of complex military operations.[40] At a time when liberals and critical theorists were busy redefining and broadening security in ways that emphasised soft power and non-military 'risks' and 'challenges', NATO engaged in its first ever combat operations; coercive military power was being increasingly employed as an instrument of diplomacy; and the EU was moving to equip itself with a 60,000-strong Rapid Reaction Corps. Illusions about the efficacy of soft power and moral suasion were further exposed by the massacre at Srebrenica, genocide in Rwanda and the brutal war in Chechnya.[41]

Although security competition in Europe remained muted in the immediate wake of the demise of Cold War bipolarity, developments from the mid-1990s onwards have not provided much sustenance for liberal-idealists. Russia was offered the 'hand of friendship' by NATO, incorporated into the 'Contact Group' on the Balkans, and became a 'strategic partner' for the EU. But it has increasingly asserted its claims to great power status; clashed with NATO over Kosovo and the Baltic states; used oil and gas for geostrategic influence in Eastern Europe; and bitterly resisted what it perceives as Western interference in Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova and Georgia. Similarly, aspirations for a 'new Transatlantic partnership' between the USA and Europe have run aground over disputes on trade, security strategy and international institutions. Transatlantic relations – despite shared norms, common institutions and extensive economic interdependence – reached their lowest ebb since Suez during the Bosnia crisis, and hit a new low at the time of the 2003 Iraq War. Germany is no longer the pliant 'reflexive multilateralist' it once appeared to be, but is increasingly

behaving as a 'normal' great power.[42] As regards the EU, after the French and Dutch referenda on the European Constitution, dreams of an 'ever closer union' are just that – dreams. The European integration process is unlikely to unravel completely in the context of balanced multipolarity, but it will be increasingly affected by calculations of relative gains. Similarly, the CFSP is increasingly likely to be determined by ad hoc agreements reached on the basis of the lowest common denominator principle.

Nothing illustrates the landscape of international politics better than war. The Iraq war of 2003 is no exception: it revealed deep divisions, not just between Europe and America, but between 'old' and 'new' Europe.[43] It demonstrated how far EU member states are from developing a 'common' European foreign policy of substance, and the hollowness of claims that 'post-modern' democracies no longer engage in power politics. Stripped of its rhetorical embellishments, the intense diplomatic struggle between France, Germany and Russia on the one hand, and the USA, UK, Poland, Italy and Spain on the other, was a classic example of power politics: at stake was not simply the fate of Saddam Hussein's Iraq, but the nature of global order in the twenty-first century, and claims to the leadership of 'Europe'. Divisions within Europe were openly displayed by the publication of the 'Letter of Eight' and that of the 'Vilnius Ten'. As France and Germany sought to profile themselves as the tribunes of anti-war sentiment in Europe and the guardians of 'European' values,[44] the leaders of eight countries – Britain, Spain, Italy, Poland, Hungary, Denmark and Portugal – published a letter on 30 January 2003 emphasising their support for US policy. This was followed six days later by the Vilnius Ten letter which also expressed solidarity with America. President Chirac added to the climate of division and controversy by accusing the signatories of the Vilnius letter of childish and irresponsible behaviour, and arrogantly suggesting that they had 'missed a good opportunity to keep quiet'.[45]

Events in the early twenty-first century thus suggest that great power rivalry and mistrust are far from over in contemporary Europe. Since the demise of bipolarity, Europe's great powers have been relearning their old roles, and as they do so, the logic of power balancing is beginning to reassert itself.[46] What is significant is that the dynamics of power politics are re-emerging in Europe, not because of the existence or otherwise of 'revisionist' states with aggressively minded leaders, but because of structural pressures generated by the international system. European states – regardless of their domestic political character or 'strategic culture' – find themselves responding to the competitive logic of a 'self-help' order which liberal approaches to International Relations tend to air-brush out of the picture.

The limits of liberalism

There is much that is admirable about liberalism and the values that animate its domestic political agenda. It champions individual rights and freedoms, and advocates limited government with constitutionally guaranteed rights for its

citizens. Liberalism seeks to protect individuals from the arbitrary power of the state, and to ensure that all citizens are equal in the eyes of the law. It also stands for open markets and free trade, and has long been associated with capitalist free enterprise. Liberals tend to favour peace and cooperation abroad, envisaging a just world order based on liberal states enjoying domestic legitimacy and harmonious relations with each other. Above all, liberalism stands for the values of tolerance, openness and mutual accommodation.

Yet while liberalism has helped shaped open, tolerant and pluralist liberal democracies in much of the Western world, it provides a poor guide to the theory and practice of international politics. Indeed, Stanley Hoffmann has concluded that 'international affairs have been the nemesis of liberalism'.[47] Liberalism has some valuable insights into political praxis and ethical choices in hierarchical orders (i.e. in domestic politics), but has little relevance to anarchic realms. Its most debilitating weakness is its tendency to overlook the realities of power in international politics. As Reinhold Niebuhr and E.H. Carr noted, all politics is about power, domestic and international.[48] In the anarchic domain of international politics, where self-help is the name of the game, power operates in a much more direct, raw and coercive manner than in domestic politics. Liberals tend to assume that politics operates on the basis of an underlying harmony of individual and group interests, and thus overlooks the clash of competing interests that generates rivalry, suspicion and the struggle for power. In domestic political communities, this competition of rival interests can be constrained and tamed by a sovereign authority able to provide and safeguard order. In international politics, however, no such sovereign body exists, and the clash of interests between 'conflict groups' is more brutal and visceral.[49]

Because liberals fail to appreciate the significance of power and the competitive nature of international politics, their policy prescriptions are often imprudent, if not naïve. They place undue faith in the efficacy of international organisations, international law and moral opinion to tackle international security problems. This proved disastrous in the 1930s, and inadequate in the 1990s. Moreover, liberalism is intimately bound up with the mores and values of Western civilisation, and yet liberals fail to recognise that the norms, values and principles they advocate are often a cloak for particular interests (particularly those of vested economic interests, as well as rich and powerful liberal-democratic states, who also tend to be status quo powers).[50]

As regards the international political economy, liberals tend to overestimate the transformative potential of globalisation and have an overly positive view of economic interdependence. This leads to an underestimation of the political and social problems inherent in a global capitalist economy of private traders and investors who constitute a 'new and unaccountable power that is dangerous in itself'.[51] Moreover, echoing the illusions of generations of Marxists before them, they suggest that the state is 'withering away' because globalisation is inexorably 'blurring' the boundaries between domestic and international politics.[52] Consequently, they argue that the realm of international politics is no longer anarchic, but is now

'plurilateral', 'heterarchic' or 'polyarchic'.[53] Because they give insufficient weight to the different ordering principles governing anarchic and hierarchical realms, liberals underestimate the difficulties associated with transposing notions of justice, governance and democracy from the domestic to the international level.

More generally, liberals have endorsed four mutually incompatible sets of norms in international affairs: sovereignty, national self-determination, democracy and human rights. 'An implicit assumption of liberalism', Stanley Hoffmann writes, 'is that all good things come together, and unfortunately, that is not true.'[54] Democracies can persecute minorities; state sovereignty conflicts with the international protection of human rights; and national self-determination can threaten sovereignty.[55] As Michael Oakeshott notes, 'every moral ideal is potentially an obsession; the pursuit of moral ideals is an idolatry in which particular objects are recognized as "gods"':

> Too often the excessive pursuit of one ideal leads to the exclusion of others; in our eagerness to realize justice we may come to forget charity, and a passion for righteousness has made many a man hard and merciless. There is, indeed, no ideal the pursuit of which will not lead to disillusion; *chagrin* waits at the end for all who take this path. Every admirable ideal has its opposite, no less admirable.[56]

Above all, because of their explicit normative concerns, liberal approaches to the study of international politics frequently confuse what is with what ought to be. The problems with idealists and utopians, as E.H. Carr argued, is that their normative agenda blinds them to the realities of the international system. The utopian, Carr argued, 'believes in the possibility of more or less radically rejecting reality, and substituting his utopia for it by an act of will'.[57] 'What is so troubling about the liberal explanation', the peace researcher John Vasquez argues, 'is that it seems so ideological':

> The danger of liberalism to scientific enquiry is that because it is a normative philosophy for making foreign policy there is a constant risk that its ideological tendencies will swallow up any scientifically neutral attempt to test its empirical components. Such testing is best done with a neorealist paradigm that remains consciously separate from any political ideology. . . .
>
> The major flaw with the liberal explanation is that the ideological nature of the paradigm leads it to emphasise the benign aspects of democratic state behaviour in a way that distorts the historical record in a manner that is politically self-serving.[58]

Similarly, Stanley Hoffmann notes that although neoliberal institutionalists seek to portray their findings as scientific, they are based on a distinct set of implicit, but concealed, values;

> These are old liberal values of harmony and cooperation and the preference for cooperation over conflict. There is at the core of the neoliberal platform an act of faith in the good work that these regimes and organizations can perform, while at the same time they present themselves as value free and purely scientific.[59]

Having considered the antinomies of liberalism, we shall now turn to its main rival within the discipline of International Relations – realism. Realist international theory, it is often said, considers the world as it is, not as it ought to be. More than this, however, realism – or more specifically structural realism – offers a sophisticated set of theoretical tools for explaining the complexities of international politics in the contemporary European security system, complexities that both liberalism and critical theory are singularly ill-equipped to elucidate.

3

REALIST INTERNATIONAL THEORY

> The primary purpose of any theory is to clarify concepts and ideas that have become, as it were, confused and entangled. Not until terms and concepts have been defined can one hope to make any progress in examining the question clearly and simply and expect the reader to share one's views.
>
> Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War*[1]

This chapter provides an outline of the main tenets of Realist International Theory and a definition of some of its key concepts. Realism, as we have seen, is a broad church, which emphasises the constraints on human progress and the inherent tragedy of international politics. Whereas classical realism explains international politics in terms of human nature and the domestic character of states, neorealism focuses on the structural pressures that 'shape and shove' the behaviour of states in the international system. Neorealism is also an explicitly parsimonious theory that seeks to provide elegant theoretical explanations to the 'big questions' of international politics, such as the causes of war and the conditions of peace. Within neorealism, however, there are important differences between Waltz and the 'second generation defensive realists', and between 'defensive realists' and 'offensive realists'.[2]

The theory outlined here draws on the insights of a number of realist scholars, but has drunk most deeply from the original source of structural realism – the work of Kenneth Waltz himself. In terms of the subsequent debates amongst neorealists, however, the approach adopted here aligns more closely with the 'offensive realism' of John Mearsheimer rather than the 'defensive realism' of Kenneth Waltz, Stephen Van Evera and Barry Posen. Nonetheless, the theoretical exposition presented below differs in a number of respects from that of Mearsheimer, both in terms of its core theoretical assumptions, the propositions inferred from them about the dynamics of international politics, and the deductive logic of offensive realism.

These differences are indicative of the fact that neorealist theory is not a set of shibboleths set in stone. Rather, it is an analytical tool for 'turning the soil of

ignorance' and going beyond mere description of the ephemera of events. By analysing the structural distribution of relative power capabilities in contemporary Europe, neorealism offers an elegant and parsimonious theory for elucidating the underlying systemic pressures shaping the broad patterns of international security relations in the region.

I KEY TENETS OF NEOREALISM

Neorealist analyses are based on a set of core assumptions, from which a series of general propositions are inferred.[3] These can be used to generate more specific empirical hypotheses for testing.

Core assumptions

1 International systems are anarchic

Structural realism depicts the international system as anarchic – a domain without a sovereign. For this reason, it is also a self-help system: states must look to their own security and survival in what is a competitive realm. Security competition is pervasive, and although war is a relatively rare occurrence, there is always the risk that security competition could lead to war given the anarchic nature of international politics. Most importantly, neorealism suggests that the primary roots of conflict and war lie not in the domestic character of individual states or regimes, or in human nature, but in the structure and dynamics of the international system.[4]

At this point, critics of neorealism will object that the concept of anarchy is too simplistic to describe contemporary international politics, which – as Waltz himself acknowledges – are 'flecked with particles of government and alloyed with elements of community', including supranational organisations, alliances and multinational corporations. Although not 'formally organised', he continues, the world 'is not entirely without institutions and orderly procedures'.[5] In purely descriptive terms, it is certainly correct to argue that all international politics involves a complex blend of 'power politics' and elements of legitimate institutional governance and consensual 'authority'.[6] But such criticism fundamentally misunderstands the nature of the neorealist theoretical enterprise, which is about explanation not description. Theoretically, it is important to identify the dominant ordering principle of international politics: either hierarchy or anarchy. To add additional categories would 'bring the classification of societies closer to reality', but it would also involve 'a move away from a theory claiming explanatory power to a less theoretical system promising greater descriptive accuracy'.[7] Waltz notes that the appearance of hierarchic elements within anarchic international systems (which is what the European integration process constitutes) 'does not alter and should not obscure that principle by which a society is ordered'. States

in anarchic systems can still cooperate together and establish organisations, he argues; however, although the 'hierarchic elements' established within international structures may 'limit and restrain the exercise of sovereignty', they do so 'only in ways strongly conditioned by the anarchy of the larger system'.[8]

2 States are the primary international actors

Realists, like Marxists, emphasise the importance of groups, not individuals, in human history. International politics is the realm of competition between rival political groups, the most important of which is the state. The state is not the only international actor, but it is by far the most important. The modern nation-state is 'the human group of strongest social cohesion, of most undisputed central authority and of most clearly defined membership'. Since the seventeenth century, therefore, it has been 'the most absolute of all human associations'.[9] States, especially the great powers, establish the context and define the rules for other actors, including international organisations like the European Union, the UN and the OSCE. International organisations are not actors in their own right, but they can function at times as vehicles for the collective interests of their most powerful member states. As Waltz notes

> states set the scene in which they, along with nonstate actors, stage their dramas or carry on their humdrum affairs. Though they may choose to interfere little in the affairs of nonstate actors for long periods of time, states nevertheless set the terms of the intercourse.[10]

3 States are functionally similar

In hierarchical systems, units become functionally differentiated. In anarchic systems, however, units remain functionally similar. States retain similar institutional features and are socialised into the international system through a combination of competition and imitation. 'Since the theory depicts international politics as a competitive system', Waltz argues, 'one predicts more specifically that states will display characteristics common to competitors: namely, that they will imitate each other and become socialized to their system.'[11] Functional similarity also means that all states – particularly great powers – seek to maintain a balanced portfolio of capabilities across the three main dimensions of power: military power, economic power and power over opinion.[12] One important consequence of this is that all great powers have some offensive military capability, 'which gives them the wherewithal to hurt and possibly destroy each other'.[13]

4 States are rational, unitary actors

For the purposes of the theory, neorealism assumes that states are unitary actors capable of acting consciously, reflexively and strategically on the basis of

rational calculation of the costs and benefits of alternative courses of action. Clearly, this is not descriptively true. Since Allison's pioneering work, it is common knowledge that all states are characterised by institutional polyphony, and that rationality is 'bounded'.[14] However, explaining the regularities and repetitions of international politics involves abstracting and simplifying domestic political processes. Allison's work sought to explain a specific foreign policy decision; neorealism seeks to explain the broad patterns of international politics and state behaviour over time. Consequently, it makes the assumption that states are conscious, reflexive and strategic in their behaviour. They act purposely to realise their interests and preferences, and monitor the results of their actions in order to adjust or revise strategic choices. Over time, therefore, states engage in a process of 'strategic learning', and become more acquainted with the opportunities and constraints of the structural context within which they operate. States, it is assumed, 'are able not just to perceive systemic-level constraints but also to formulate and to execute measures in response to them'.[15] They 'consider the preferences of other states and how their behaviour is likely to affect the behaviour of those other states, and how the behaviour of those other states is likely to affect their own strategy for survival'.[16] As Keohane notes, the rationality assumption is the crucial link between system structure and actor behaviour, 'which enables the theorist to predict that leaders will respond to the incentives and constraints imposed by their environment'.[17]

Propositions

On the basis of these assumptions, a set of five propositions can be inferred about the dynamics of the international system and the motive-forces driving states' interaction with other states.

1 Security competition in a self-help system

International anarchy, coupled with the constant shadow of war and conflict, generates pervasive security competition in what remains a self-help system. States must rely for their survival and security on their own resources, or on those of their allies. The level of security competition varies according to the structural distribution of power in the system, but it can never be eradicated. Fear is pervasive, and trust is a scarce commodity. In this context, cooperation is difficult – though not impossible – to achieve, and those institutions that are created have no independent power or autonomy. 'They are based on the self-interested calculations of the great powers, and they have no independent effect on state behaviour.'[18] Consequently, the international organisations which comprise Europe's dense institutional architecture can be regarded as intervening variables which occasionally modify the behaviour of states, but which have a marginal impact on the structural dynamics of the European security system.

2 Security and power maximisation

In anarchic self-help systems, security is the primary concern of states. At the very least, therefore, states must act as 'defensive positionalists', seeking to maintain their position in the pecking order of great powers.[19] However, the structure of the international system is such that there are strong incentives for states to think more aggressively about maximising their power. Security is best assured by maximising power so as to be able to eliminate or neutralise all potential rivals and establishing hegemony over one's region.[20] At the very least, states must seek to preserve their power relative to their potential enemies and competitors: if they can strengthen their position relative to others, so much the better. Systemic pressures mean that all states are, at the very least, security maximisers: but this in turn means that they have a rational interest in maximising their relative power capabilities because this is the ideal way to guarantee survival. The anarchic structure of the international system thus provides states with a powerful incentive for power maximisation.

Nonetheless, this does not mean that all states are, at all times, aggressively seeking to maximise their power: some states may not be strong enough to do so, others might lack the opportunity by virtue of their geopolitical location. Some powerful states might eschew an overt power maximisation strategy because of the risk that in doing so, they would provoke a hostile counter-balancing coalition or pre-emptive strikes. Realism assumes that states are rational actors, and thus when power maximisation strategies appear to be counter-productive, states will focus on security maximisation until more favourable opportunities present themselves. In certain circumstances, therefore, states will behave more like defensive positionalists rather than power maximisers, seeking to maintain their position within the system. All the while, however, these states – if they are behaving rationally – will be constantly on the look-out for opportunities to increase their relative power, and when faced with such occasions, they will act opportunistically to maximise their power.[21] In this sense, states will instinctively employ a marginal utility calculus, weighing up the expected costs of pursuing power maximisation versus the perceived benefits.[22]

3 Relative gains

Neorealism posits that states focus on relative gains, and argues that this places limits on cooperative ventures. States are concerned about their position in the international system relative to their main rivals and potential enemies, and will therefore only engage in cooperation if they benefit as much or more than their peer equivalents.[23] This is particularly the case with major powers; small powers can be more relaxed, and are often more content with absolute gains. Nonetheless, realists recognise that in some conditions, great power concerns with relative gains may also be relaxed. This tends to occur in conditions when security competition is muted or weak, and when states do not face an immediate

inter-state threat: 'Absolute gains become more important as competition lessens.'[24] Even in this context, however, major powers remain concerned about relative gains, and rarely rest content with absolute gains for long.[25]

Waltz notes that concerns with relative gains were muted in Western Europe in the Cold War, because of bipolarity and nuclear weapons. Once the possibility of war between Western Europe's great powers was removed, they could 'more freely run the risk of suffering a relative loss'. Enterprises more beneficial to some parties than others could be engaged in, 'partly in the belief that overall the enterprise is valuable'. Economic gains for some could be offered in exchange for expected political advantages, 'including the benefit of strengthening the structure of European cooperation'.[26]

4 Milieu shaping

States, especially great powers, have an interest in the stability of their external environment. This is a function of their overriding concern with security and survival in a self-help system. Consequently they will use their material power capabilities not only to exert direct influence or control over other actors, but also to shape the external environment within which they operate. In other words, they will pursue what Arnold Wolfers termed 'milieu goals', in an effort to shape the material and strategic context which frames their policy choices.[27]

Waltz noted that all states face four common problems: poverty, pollution, population growth and proliferation.[28] Today, one can add at least two more: international terrorism and failed states. These problems pose common threats to the security and well-being of the great powers, giving rise to shared concerns with shaping their external milieu and managing the challenges of the post-Cold War world. The problem, however, is how the required management or governance of the international system can be achieved in the absence of a central authority. Who will incur the costs of addressing common problems given concerns about relative gains? How can the 'free-rider' problem be overcome? Will major powers allow any one of their number to take the lead in addressing common problems if they will thereby accrue political or other benefits? Waltz argues that system-wide management tasks are more likely to be undertaken by great powers, because they have a greater stake in the stability of the system, and because they have the capabilities to take on special responsibilities. 'Units having a large enough stake in the system will act for its own sake, even though they pay unduly in doing so.'[29] This is not the result of an altruistic and idealist concern to serve the common good, but rather a function of 'enlightened self-interest' driven by strategic and security interests.

5 Second-order concerns

Neorealists recognise that states are not only motivated purely by concerns with security and power maximisation. They also pursue a range of moral and ethical

concerns reflecting their distinct political values – from protecting the environment to international human rights. But realists maintain that these are always 'second-order' concerns: they rank below national security and other fundamental national interests in importance, and when push comes to shove, states will sacrifice second-order concerns that clash with their core national interests or conflict with balance-of-power logic.

Realists are not blinkered and one-dimensional in their thinking, as their critics allege: they recognise that international politics is not merely a realm of naked power politics, and that states are not simply motivated by an insatiable lust for power. Even 'offensive realists' like John Mearsheimer recognise that there is 'a well-developed and widely accepted body of idealist or liberal norms in international politics', and that 'most leaders and most of their followers want their state to behave according to those ideals and norms, and that state behaviour often conforms to these general principles'.[30] But few states – and certainly, few states that wish to survive in the competitive realm of international politics – act on ethical or normative principles when these conflict with what they perceive to be their vital interests.

II KEY CONCEPTS

Power

Neorealist analyses of international politics focus centrally on the distribution of relative power capabilities. Material power capabilities are viewed as the crucial variable affecting the structural dynamics of a regional security system. Consequently, how power is conceptualised and operationalised within neorealism's analytical framework is a question of critical import.

What is power? Who has it, and what are its sources? How can relative power differentials be measured? Is power absolute, finite and fixed, or contextual, relational and situational? These intractable questions have generated an enormous volume of academic writings, but little consensus. Politics is centrally about power, but power remains an elusive concept: like 'security' or 'democracy', it constitutes one of the 'essentially contested concepts' that pervade the social sciences.[31]

Much of the Anglo-Saxon academic debate in Political Science has focused on the 'three faces of power'. Robert Dahl in his seminal work defined power as the ability of A to get B to do something 'that B would not otherwise do': this is the first face of power (sometimes known as the 'pluralist' view of power). Working within the 'elitist' school of thought, however, Peter Bachrach and Morton Baratz argued that there was a second face of power: power over decision-making and agenda-setting. Not to be outdone, Steven Lukes, a critical theorist, argued that there was a third face of power: the ability to shape preferences, at times in opposition to an actor's 'real' interests.[32]

The problems with the three faces of power debate for international political theory are twofold. The first is methodological: operationalising the study of all three faces of power presents the researcher with substantial difficulties. The second is more fundamental: these concepts of power focus primarily on outcomes, not the sources of power. Policy outcomes are conceptually problematic because they depend on the contingent, the unexpected and the exceptional (such as the quality of leadership or virtuoso diplomatic skills). Outcomes depend not on how much power one has, but how effectively one uses it. Some actors may wield power more efficiently and with greater effect than others, employing the 'Judo principle' of using an opponent's strength against him or her.

For this reason, Realists tend to focus on the power capabilities of agents, not policy outcomes. Neorealist analyses emphasise the material sources of national power, i.e. the capabilities and resources that constitute its 'potential power'.[33] Power capabilities are methodologically more amenable to theoretical analysis. Although such a definition involves abstraction and simplification, a theoretical explanation of international politics does not require a descriptively accurate concept that elucidates power in all its manifold manifestations, nuances and specifics. Rather, a theory of international politics requires an elegant and parsimonious concept of power which offers 'maximum leverage' within a policy-contingent framework specifying scope and domain.[34]

What are the attributes or resources that generate power capabilities? Some analysts focus on one attribute as the primary determinant of power capability: Mearsheimer, for example, identifies military capabilities as the main indicator of a state's power;[35] Marxists, on the other hand, privilege economic power. Most realists, however, maintain that power resides in a basket of material capabilities. E.H. Carr, for example, argued that there were three sources of power in international politics: military, economic and 'power over opinion'.[36] The first two are tangible capabilities rooted in material factors, the third is an intangible resource which is closely bound up with the perception of others, and therefore difficult to operationalise and quantify.[37] Carr himself noted that although the different sources of power are 'theoretically separable, it is difficult in practice to imagine a country for any length of time possessing one kind of power in isolation from the others. In its essence', he concluded, 'power is an indivisible whole.'[38]

The concept of power used in this analysis is defined primarily in terms of a basket of tangible capabilities: military, economic and technological.[39] Power derives from a basket of material capabilities, rather than from any one factor alone. As Waltz notes:

> The economic, military, and other capabilities of nations cannot be sectored and separately weighed. States are not placed in the top rank because they excel in one or another. Their rank depends on how they score on *all* of the following items: size of population and territory,

> resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence. . . . Ranking states, however, does not require predicting their success in war or in other endeavours. We need only rank them roughly by capability.[40]

Military capabilities are clearly critical in assessing an actor's power capabilities in a self-help system, but military power is difficult to develop or sustain without sound economic foundations or an effective political-administrative body to translate wealth into usable military power. Although historically some states have achieved great power status primarily by building up effective military forces (examples being Prussia in the mid-eighteenth century and the Soviet Union in the second half of the twentieth century), over time military power is unsustainable without the necessary economic, political and technological foundations.[41] On the other hand, however, substantial economic capabilities are no basis for security in a self-help system, as the vulnerability of oil-rich Kuwait to Saddam's Iraq in 1991 demonstrates. In the harsh world of international security, clubs trump diamonds.

The final point to note is that, as noted above, power capabilities can be used in two ways. They can either be used directly to affect the conduct of others, or indirectly, to shape the international milieu. The employment of power capabilities to affect the conduct of other actors is more direct, immediate and observable; the use of power for 'milieu-shaping' is more indirect, latent, long term and subtle. It involves altering the situational or structural context within which states interact: more specifically, it seeks to shape the preferences of others by altering the incentive structure of costs and benefits which frames their strategic choices.[42] Indeed, the very existence and presence of states with substantial power capabilities is likely to affect the behaviour of others, even if it is not used directly and intentionally. 'Force', as Waltz notes, 'is least visible where power is most fully and most adequately present.' Possession of power, he continues, 'should not be identified with the use of force, and the usefulness of force should not be identified with its usability'.[43]

What is a 'great power'?

Realism is primarily a theory of great power politics, simply because it is the most powerful units in the international system that have the greatest impact on its structural dynamics.[44] This begs the question: what attributes distinguish a 'great power' from lesser states in international politics?

The concept of a great power has its origins in renaissance diplomacy in fifteenth-century Italy, but was only fully articulated as a principle of diplomatic practice in the Peace of Paris that followed the Napoleonic wars.[45] It was formally used for the first time in the 1817 Treaty of Chaumont. The precise meaning of the term, however, remains elusive and contested. Substantial military power capabilities are clearly a *sine qua non*, but alone are not sufficient to

ensure great power status. Nor is substantial economic clout sufficient. Great powers are not defined by any single power attribute, but by a range of capabilities including population, natural resources, technological development, military strength, organisational efficiency and social consensus. Using a basket of material capabilities, one can identify a potential regional 'great power'.[46] But the sobriquet of 'great power' implies more than raw power capabilities; it implies a particular political attitude and foreign policy behaviour. More precisely, it implies a sense of political responsibility for the management of collective affairs in the wider international system that goes beyond one's immediate interests, and which is acknowledged by others.[47] Hedley Bull argued that great powers are 'recognised by others to have, and conceived by their own leaders and peoples to have, certain special rights and duties'.[48]

A great power can thus be defined by three features: (a) substantial power resources across a range of capabilities, most importantly, military and economic; (b) a disposition to define its interests in broad terms that go beyond the need to survive in a self-help system and include a sense of responsibility for milieu-shaping, system management and providing collective goods; and (c) a willingness to pursue its interests, both vital and non-vital, using whatever power resources are most appropriate, not excluding military force. Military capabilities for both a credible national defence and for power projection are thus a *sine qua non* for great power status, but are not sufficient.

One important point to note is that some states can enjoy substantial power capabilities, but resist acting like a 'great power'.[49] In other words, they deny that they have a particular responsibility for wider system management, and consciously eschew the use of hard power capabilities that give substance to diplomacy and demonstrate resolve. From the late 1960s onwards, both the Federal Republic of Germany and Japan enjoyed substantial power resources (including conventional military forces), but consciously eschewed a great power role for themselves. Both states pursued self-consciously modest, cautious and limited foreign policies, in close association with the USA, in order to overcome suspicions and mistrust created by their behaviour in the Second World War. Both were subsequently described as 'civilian powers', consciously rejecting traditional 'great power' Realpolitik in favour of multilateralism, soft power and self-restraint.[50]

Structural realism, however, would suggest that such a 'civilian power' orientation would prove hard to sustain in the face of the systemic pressures generated by post-Cold War multipolarity. The structural context does not force states to act in a particular way in any mechanistic or deterministic manner, but it is 'strategically selective', in that it rewards certain strategies and punishes others. States with substantial power capabilities that fail to act as 'great powers' will be penalised in competition with their peers. Thus, as Waltz argued, the international system provides a powerful set of structural pressures that 'socialise' states into their foreign policy 'roles'. Systemic pressures, in other words, encourage states with substantial power resources to take up a responsibility for

milieu-shaping and system management, in order to compete effectively with other great powers. In Waltz's words, they will be forced to learn new great power roles, or re-learn old ones.

The impact of systemic pressures on Germany and Japan – both of which were seen as archetypal 'civilian powers' in the Cold War – is instructive in this regard. As we shall see in Chapter 7, Germany engaged in a sustained process of strategic learning after reunification and the end of the Cold War which involved accepting new responsibilities for the collective management of international affairs, and reassessing its attitude towards the use of force. A similar process of strategic learning has taken place in Japan, which has responded to the rise of China and the consequent shift in the balance of power by enhancing its military capabilities and adopting a more assertive foreign policy.[51] These two cases accord with realist expectations that a state possessing substantial material capabilities will be subject to systemic pressures that will tend, over time, to generate a 'great power' identity and a matching set of foreign policy role conceptions, which in turn will be reflected in that state's grand strategy.

International order

The sources and nature of 'order' in international politics is one of the constitutive questions defining International Relations as a discipline. In his classic of Renaissance political thinking *The Prince*, Niccolò Machiavelli argued that the foundation of any political order was a judicious mix of force and authority, coercion and consent, brute strength and reasoned persuasion. He used the allegory of the centaur, Chiron ('half beast and half man'), to argue that the modern prince needed to learn how to 'make a nice use of the beast and the man'.[52] Only when one knew how to act 'according to the nature of both', Machiavelli reasoned, could one develop appropriate strategies for survival and security in a hostile environment. Writing specifically of the state as a political institution, he argued that all states were based on 'good laws and good arms'. Good laws, he continued, could only exist where there were good arms, 'and where there are good ones, good laws inevitably follow'.[53] This line of analysis was subsequently picked up and developed by Antonio Gramsci, who spoke of the 'dual perspective' in political life 'corresponding to Machiavelli's Centaur – half animal and half-human'. For Gramsci, this 'dual perspective' focused attention on 'the levels of force and consent, authority and hegemony, violence and civilisation, of the individual moment and the universal moment'.[54]

Machiavelli's primary concern was, of course, the state, i.e. with order within a hierarchical realm. He emphasised the relationship between the rule of law and coercive power: it was only the latter, he argued, which ensured that the laws of the land were respected and obeyed. This understanding of the state as the body which provides domestic law and order by virtue of the ultimate sanction of coercive power has been central to subsequent conceptions of state power – from Hobbes's *Leviathan* to Max Weber's definition of the state's monopoly of

legitimate force.[55] In anarchic systems, however, there is no centralised authority with the monopoly of the legitimate use of force able to ensure compliance with laws or normative values. The problem of order arises not simply from the lack of a 'Leviathan' or 'modern prince', but rather from the multitude of competing Leviathans, each looking to their own security and survival in a competitive environment. In this anarchic environment, there is no ultimate sanction to ensure that laws are respected, norms upheld and institutions honoured. In anarchic realms, therefore, order emerges from very different structural mechanisms than in hierarchic political systems.

Order in international politics comes about when there is a broad equilibrium in power relationships between the major actors in the system.[56] The underlying ordering principle of international political systems is the balance of power, not institutional arrangements, shared norms or moral suasion. When there is a marked imbalance in the distribution of power capabilities between the major actors in an international system, the prospects for cooperation are diminished, and the likelihood of conflict – even war – increases. When power configurations are balanced and stable, then conflict is much less likely and the prospects for cooperation improve. A stable balance of power between the system's most powerful actors is thus the basis of international order, within which minor powers can manoeuvre to gain advantages, and upon which arrangements for international 'governance' can develop. If power is balanced, then a rudimentary 'society of states' can emerge, in the minimalist sense of a basic understanding between major powers of the advantages of cooperation for system maintenance and milieu-shaping.

But these forms of cooperation do not negate, nullify or tame anarchy: they do not transform the anarchic nature of international politics, nor do they change its fundamental ordering principle or structural dynamics. They are always fragile and provisional, and dependent on a stable balance of power. The elements of sociability, cooperation and governance that emerge remain vulnerable to tectonic shifts in the underlying structure of power – and the structural distribution of power is always in flux. International political systems – like all anarchic realms – are highly competitive and dynamic. States strive to gain a competitive edge over their rivals by innovation, and to preserve their position in the pecking order by emulation. These organisational and technological changes associated with innovation and emulation constantly trigger changes in the relative competitiveness of states. The result is that configurations of power balances in international politics never remain fixed or static for long, but are in a constant state of flux and reflux. This is a result of an ineluctable process of uneven development which characterises the processes of economic growth, technological innovation and scientific progress.[57] The consequence of this is that the power capabilities of states tend to wax and wane at different rates, generating shifts in the constellation of relative power capabilities within an international political system.

Great powers may thus cooperate to mutual advantage in the context of a

stable balance of power, but they remain concerned about the shadow of the future. They are aware that today's partners may be tomorrow's adversaries, and visa versa. Thus they never ignore the issue of relative gains, i.e. who gains most from cooperative ventures. Moreover, in the face of a future rendered uncertain and unpredictable by uneven development and shifting constellations of power relations between them, states are concerned to maximise their relative power capabilities. This is the only sure way to safeguard their security and independence in the future. This concern with power maximisation adds a further element of security competition to the mix, and means that there is no such thing as a status quo great power.[58]

The result is an international order characterised by an ambiguous and complex mix of cooperation and conflict, force and consent, domination and governance. States may face many shared problems that range across borders, from pollution and migration to terrorism and proliferation, but the difficulties of achieving cooperation under anarchy make their solution problematic. Order in international politics thus depends on an underlying balance of power, and is manifested in a mix of 'power' and 'authority' methods of resolving clashes of interest.[59] This also means that great powers exhibit a complex mix of policy behaviour, combining coercion with accommodation, cooperation and conflict, force and diplomacy, i.e. behaviour traits that correspond to Machiavelli's allegory of the Centaur, 'half beast and half man'.

Four typologies of power configurations

The crucial variable affecting the behaviour patterns of great powers and the prospects for their mutual cooperation is how relative power capabilities are distributed between them. The character of international order, in other words, depends on the topography of power relations. Some constellations of power distribution are more stable than others. There are four main power constellations in international systems: unipolarity, bipolarity, balanced multipolarity and unbalanced multipolarity.

(1) *Unipolarity* exists when there is one state – a *hyperpuissance*, or 'hyperpower', in the words of former French Foreign Minister Vedrine – with power capabilities substantially beyond those of other great powers. Unipolarity, however, remains an unequal configuration of power within an anarchic international system: it must therefore be distinguished from a hierarchic system with a dominant hegemon or global Leviathan.[60] A unipolar system exists where a hyperpower has successfully established its hegemony in its geographical region, and faces no other equivalent competitors amongst the other great powers. In one sense, it represents an extreme version of unbalanced multipolarity on a global scale, although the dynamics it engenders are different from those of contingent power imbalances in geopolitically discrete regional security systems. The preponderant power in a unipolar system might not have any peer rivals able to balance its economic and military capabilities, but this does not

mean it is a global hegemon. As John Mearsheimer notes, global hegemony is almost impossible to establish because of geography and the 'stopping power of water'. Large expanses of water make it hard to project power into other regions and continents. Hegemony is therefore only really feasible in geographically contiguous regions. Once a state has established its regional hegemony, its primary concern will not be to strive for global hegemony, but rather to prevent the rise of other regional hegemons who might otherwise be able to challenge their power.

The preponderant power – or hyperpower – within a unipolar system enjoys a very secure external environment with no peer rivals in its regional environ. In bipolar systems, competition from a peer rival places significant constraints on superpower behaviour. Hyperpowers in a unipolar system, however, enjoy the luxury of having considerable room for manoeuvre in global affairs. Their freedom of action in the wider international system is relatively unconstrained, and they have considerable discretion in both the selection of foreign policy objectives and choice of the instruments of statecraft. As Waltz notes, 'greater power permits wider ranges of action, while leaving the outcomes of action uncertain'. More powerful states 'enjoy wider margins of safety in dealing with the less powerful and have more to say about which games will be played and how'. Whereas weak states 'operate on narrow margins' and cannot afford flawed policies or inopportune acts,

> strong states can be inattentive; they can afford not to learn; they can do the same dumb things over again. More sensibly, they can react slowly and wait to see whether the apparently threatening acts of others are truly so. They can be indifferent to most threats because only a few threats, if carried through, can damage them gravely. They can hold back until the ambiguity of events is resolved without fearing that the moment for effective action will be lost.[61]

Because of their relative power advantage, preponderant states in unipolar systems can behave in capricious, arbitrary and unpredictable ways. Very powerful states without serious peer rivals can choose when to intervene in regional conflicts or humanitarian tragedies, and when not to. This makes hyperpowers unreliable, high-handed and capricious allies, and unipolar systems relatively unstable and unpredictable. Some neorealists, however, expect that balancing coalitions will ultimately form against a unipolar power; others suggest that new great powers will emerge as peer rivals. With some exceptions, most realists assume that hyperpowers can only expect to enjoy a short-lived unipolar 'moment', and that unipolarity will not prove durable.

(2) *Bipolarity*: the second main power configuration is bipolarity. Bipolarity exists when there are two dominant powers – or 'superpowers' – whose power capabilities are considerably greater than those of other great powers.[62] The classic example of bipolarity is, of course, the Cold War. Bipolarity tends to be

an inherently stable distribution of power. There is only one primary conflict dyad; balancing assumes the form of 'internal' balancing (i.e. generating power capabilities from domestic sources, rather from other allies); and the superpowers tend to exert a moderating influence over their allies and clients, in order to avoid being dragged into conflicts with their superpower rival.

(3) *Balanced multipolarity*: multipolarity exists when there are three or more great powers in the system. Historically, multipolarity has been the dominant power configuration in the modern European states' system. Multipolar systems tend to be less stable and predictable than bipolar ones: there are multiple potential conflict dyads, and balancing coalitions tend to be less stable because of the tendency of defection and realignment. However, a further distinction can be drawn between two sorts of multipolarity: balanced multipolar systems and unbalanced ones.

'Balanced multipolarity' exists when there are three or more states with broadly comparable power capabilities. In this situation, none of the great powers can make a feasible bid for regional hegemony, and hence states tend to emphasise security maximisation over power maximisation.[63] In this context, great power cooperation becomes possible, and can assume the form of the nineteenth-century 'Concert of Europe'.[64] Concert diplomacy involves great power cooperation in collective milieu-shaping and for the joint pursuit of second order interests.

(4) *Unbalanced multipolarity:* In unbalanced multipolarity, by contrast, one of the system's great powers has significantly greater power resources than the others, and can potentially make a bid for regional hegemony. Unbalanced multipolar systems are consequently 'primed for conflict'; given the heightened sense of fear and mistrust generated by the existence of a potential hegemon, great powers focus more intensely on relative gains, and second order concerns (like environmental protection or human rights) tend to be overridden by the imperative of national security. Faced with an unstable and potentially threatening environment, great powers tend to pursue power maximisation strategies, and the shadow of war hangs heavy over international politics.

To summarise: there are four important differences between balanced and unbalanced multipolarity:

1 Concerns over relative gains are less marked in balanced than in unbalanced multipolarity.
2 Security competition is less intense in balanced multipolarity.
3 The prospects for cooperation on second order issues are better in balanced multipolarity than in unbalanced multipolarity, and thus some collective milieu-shaping is feasible.
4 Norms and values have greater scope to influence state behaviour in policy areas where vital national interests are not at stake in balanced multipolarity than unbalanced; this reflects the fact that concerns about security and survival are more acutely experienced in a regional security system which contains a potential hegemon.

Global and regional order

Neorealist analyses of international politics focus on the distribution of relative power capabilities. These must be situated both temporally and spatially. Temporally, because power capabilities of units comprising the system vary over time as a consequence of uneven economic and technological development; and spatially, because the primary units are states, which are territorially delineated and spatially located. This means that a realist analysis must consider the geographical distribution of relative power capabilities.[65]

From this perspective, it is quite apparent that the texture of international politics is not cut from the same cloth. Anarchy may be the defining feature of all international systems, but the patterns of international politics it generates varies from region to region, according to specific features of the regional distribution of power. There are clearly variations in patterns of cooperation and conflict in different regions of the world – from the Middle East to Europe, and from the Western hemisphere to Africa. A realist understanding of order must therefore distinguish between a global (or 'universal') structure of power and regional (or 'contingent') structures of power.[66]

Some critics of neorealism claim that it focuses only on the *global* structure of power and overlooks the importance of specifically *regional* dynamics of power relations.[67] Although it is the case that some realists focus primarily on the 'universal' balance of power, it is not true of realist international theory as a whole. John Mearsheimer, for example, explicitly applies his offensive realism to regional (or 'contingent') configurations of power:

> Hegemony means domination of the system, which is usually interpreted to mean the entire world. It is possible, however, to apply the concept of a system more narrowly and use it to describe particular regions, such as Europe, Northeast Asia, and the Western hemisphere. Thus, one can distinguish between *global hegemons*, which dominate the world, and *regional hegemons*, which dominate distinct geographical areas.[68]

Despite its considerable power resources, Mearsheimer argues that the USA is not a global hegemon, but a regional hegemon in the Western hemisphere. Indeed, it is the 'only regional hegemon in modern history'. The USA is undoubtedly 'the most powerful state on the planet today', but 'it does not dominate Europe and Northeast Asia the way it does the Western Hemisphere, and it has no intention of trying to conquer and control those distant regions'.[69]

The reason for this, as we have noted above, is because of 'the stopping power of water'. It is virtually impossible to project power 'across the world's oceans onto the territory of a rival great power'. Consequently, 'there has never been a global hegemon, and there is not likely to be one anytime soon'. What regional hegemons like the USA try to do is to prevent the rise of other regional hegemons 'because they fear that a rival great power that dominates its own

region will be an especially powerful foe that is essentially free to cause trouble in the fearful great power's backyard'.[70] America's global role is therefore to act as an 'off-shore balancer', intervening in distant regions in order to prevent the rise of a potential hegemon, particularly if the regional great powers are unable to contain it themselves. This was the US role in Europe during the Cold War, and it remains the role of the USA in Northeast Asia today.[71] The logic of power maximisation would also suggest that the regional hegemon will intervene proactively and assertively in other regions to prevent the emergence of peer rivals, cause trouble in other great powers' backyards, and maximise their power and influence in regions of strategic or economic importance.[72]

This book uses realist international theory to examine the contingent balance of power in the contemporary European regional security system. It considers the universal configuration of power only to the extent that it impacts upon the structural dynamics of European international politics.

III GRAND STRATEGY AND FOREIGN POLICY ROLES

By focusing on the distribution of relative power capabilities in a regional security system, realist international theory seeks to elucidate the broad patterns of unit behaviour in international political systems and to identify the structural pressures 'shaping and shoving' the grand strategies of the great powers. There has been some debate amongst realists about what precisely the theory can explain: Kenneth Waltz famously argued that his theory of international politics only explained broad *outcomes* in international political systems (such as war or peace) rather than the *behaviour* of states, for which a separate theory of foreign policy making was required.[73] Others have dissented from this narrow interpretation,[74] and Waltz himself has subsequently used his theory to explain the behaviour of the major powers since the end of bipolarity.[75] John Mearsheimer, on the other hand, has explicitly argued that offensive realism explains both outcomes and behaviour because it makes the assumption that states are rational actors.[76]

Clearly, a theory of international politics that explains outcomes but not the behaviour of the major units in the system would be of limited analytical utility. Given the assumption that states are rational actors capable of strategic learning, realist theory does generate expectations about foreign policy behaviour. The theory cannot explain the tactical calculations underlying specific foreign policy decisions, which are subject to the unpredictable play of contingency and happenstance. But it can shed considerable light on the structural pressures that shape the grand strategies of states over time.

Grand strategy

While the concept of 'strategy' is traditionally taken to refer more narrowly to the use of military power for political objectives, that of 'grand strategy' refers

more broadly to the effective use of the full range of a state's power capabilities to achieve its foreign and security policy goals. Grand strategy involves intentional action towards the environment in which it is to occur, and is therefore essentially political in nature. It entails calibrating means and ends, capabilities and objectives, on the basis of an understanding of the structural context within which the actor is situated. Grand strategies thus comprise three elements: (1) an assessment of the structured context or geopolitical location within which the actor is situated; (2) an assessment of the power capabilities and instruments of statecraft at the disposal of the actor; and (3) a definition and ranking of preferences, i.e. goals and objectives.

Foreign policy role conceptions

A state's grand strategy is closely related conceptually and analytically to its foreign policy role conceptions. All states have a set of national role conceptions, which provide decision-makers with a means of intercepting, classifying and interpreting information in terms of pre-established beliefs.[77] Role conceptions provide a means of coping with a complex external environment, and provide a set of conceptual lenses delineating the main coordinates within which policy options are weighed and assessed. Actors internalise perceptions of their context and consciously orientate themselves towards that context in choosing potential courses of action.[78] Once a distinctive role conception has emerged from recurrent patterns of activity and utterance, it will subsequently shape policy-makers' responses to new situations and developments, thus providing a conceptual road-map for their foreign policy behaviour. Role conceptions are thus the codification of regular patterns of behaviour, which subsequently serve to reinforce this patterned behaviour by specifying particular 'grooves' within which foreign policy activity takes place. As such, they are unlikely to determine short-term tactical behaviour or the minutiae of decisions, where contingency and happenstance are more in evidence. However, they do reinforce the strategic direction of foreign and security policy behaviour over the long term. Taken together, national foreign policy role conceptions comprise the basic building-blocks of a state's grand strategy.

National role conceptions and grand strategies represent a codification and rationalisation by foreign policy decision-makers of their patterned responses over time to the 'shaping and shoving' pressures of the international system. They are the result of a process of self-conscious reflection upon practice and experience. They represent, in the words of Michael Oakeshott, 'rationalizations of events that have taken place, circumstances already existing'.[79] This process of self-consciousness reflection upon foreign policy practice manifests itself in the formulation of certain general principles about the state's national interests, its national role conceptions and its grand strategy. The formulation of these general principles helps consolidate and solidify traditions of foreign policy behaviour, and give decision-makers a clearer sense of the values and interests

underpinning their day-to-day activities. At the same time, in doing so, it fixes a foreign policy tradition – it makes it 'firmer and more rigid as well as more coherent'. Once national role conceptions and grand strategy have been formulated, it becomes harder to change the underlying direction of foreign and security policy.

These codifications of foreign policy practice are drawn from two separate but related sources: first, they will reflect the systemic pressures generated by the distribution of relative power capabilities affecting the state; second, grand strategies, and the national role conceptions that comprise them, will reflect the 'intellectual fashion of the world in which [they] exist'.[80] This does not mean, however, that grand strategies are 'socially constructed' in ways that are 'divorced from power' and from the structural constraints of the international system, as social constructivists allege.[81] Strategy and role conceptions are similar in nature to what Michael Oakeshott termed 'character' in modern European politics. In Oakeshott's terms, they may be understood as the 'grooves' or 'channels' into which political activity has settled, 'the walls of which set the limits of currently possible political enterprise and utterance'. These grooves or channels have been 'excavated by human activity' and are

> . . . the product of long continued movement which has gradually chiselled out its own restrictions, each absence of deviation contributing to a result which in the course of time discloses itself unmistakably. It represents certain propensities, a certain limited range of choices which have been established in response to conditions which were themselves largely the product of choices.[82]

Grand strategies and national role conceptions are thus coloured by cultural, normative and ideological factors, which provide a prism through which the world is apprehended and policy preferences defined. However, Realism rests on a materialist ontological which maintains that ideas do not 'float free', but are shaped by material conditions. The main influences shaping the grand strategies and role conceptions of great powers over time are material and systemic. Cultural norms and values represent the accumulated sediment generated by patterned behaviour that is the result of a long and constant exposure to systemic pressures. They are similar to Oakeshott's 'doctrines', in that they 'may be expected to follow upon practice and to arise only when life and practice reach a certain level of self-consciousness'.[83] Once formed, these sediments can harden over time and endure even if the material and structural conditions which gave rise to them change. Cultural factors can thus cause a 'lag' in behaviour once the underlying material conditions change, and often prove slow to change.[84] However, once the material context changes, established cultural norms will be subject to 'cognitive dissonance'. Unit-level attributes like strategic culture and institutionalised processes of interest articulation and integration can provide a prism through which systemic pressures are refracted, but the

'strategic selectivity of structure' means that states that fail to respond adequately to structural imperatives will find themselves disadvantaged in relation to their competitors and rivals.

Three factors play a decisive part in shaping a state's grand strategy and its national role conceptions: geographical size and location; economic resources and productive capacity; and historical experience. As regards the first of these, the importance of geographical size and location is evident from the examples of both Britain and Germany. British grand strategy has clearly been decisively shaped by its island character, in the same way that Germany's has been stamped by its *Mittellage* (its central geographical location). The second key factor is economic resources and productive capacity: these shape both the means selected to pursue foreign policy goals, and those very goals themselves. Russia's contemporary grand strategy has been much influenced by its status as a major energy producer, in the same way as that of China is currently being shaped by its status as a major energy consumer. The third factor is historical experience: rightly or wrongly, states draw lessons from their past experiences.[85] They might see some states as friends, others as enemies; they might also form particular understandings of the nature of war and conflict, which will influence how they approach future international crises. Thus historical experience – which is a manifestation of the character of states as rational actors engaged in a process of strategic learning and subject to pressures of socialisation within a dynamic international system – generates particular strategic imperatives which shape policy options.

In addition to the primary influence of geography, productive capacity and historical experience, states' strategic orientations and role conceptions can be influenced by their domestic political structures and their system of governments. Moreover, in exceptional circumstances, unit-level attributes can have an important – indeed, a vital – role in defining grand strategy and national role conceptions.[86] These unit-level attributes include the quality of political leadership, ideology, regime type and special interest groups. However, as previously noted, the foreign policy behaviour of most states over time demonstrates considerable continuity, despite changes in regime type or ideology. We can conclude from this that whilst domestic factors are not unimportant, their role is secondary to that of material, systemic factors in shaping the broad, recurrent patterns of foreign policy behaviour. International political systems may not mechanistically determine state behaviour, but they do 'shape and shove' it by rewarding some strategies and punishing others.

Strategic responses to anarchy

International political systems tend towards balance. Neorealists argue that this is a systemic outcome, not necessarily the result of conscious strategic choices by all of the actors involved, which are themselves propelled by the logic of anarchy to seek to shift the balance of power in their favour. Nonetheless, states

in international anarchy instinctively seek to balance against more powerful actors or coalitions of actors. When confronted by a disadvantageous power imbalance in their regional security system, states face some tough choices. Paradoxically, strategic choices of great powers are often more limited than those of small states, which can sometimes manoeuvre within the 'interstices of a balance of power' that constrain the options of the great powers.[87]

When faced with a potential hegemon, great powers have four main options: balancing, buck-passing, bandwagoning and aggression. Smaller states have additional options, most notably 'hiding' and 'transcendence'. Each of the four main strategic options facing the great powers have advantages and disadvantages.

(1) *Balancing*: the concept of the 'balance of power' is central to realist international theory; Realists argue that states will tend to balance against stronger states or coalitions of states, for two reasons: first, for self-preservation; and second, to safeguard the existence of other states in the system – not out of altruism, but from enlightened self-interest, because other states may be potential allies against the aspirant hegemon. Balancing against the dominant power in the system can assume two forms: 'internal balancing', which involves mobilising one's own resources and thereby shifting the balance of power capabilities in one's favour; or 'external balancing', which involves forming coalitions and alliances with other states. Waltz argues that balancing is the most likely outcome international political theory would predict.[88] However, balancing is both costly and risky: it is costly in terms of the use of scarce resources for military expenditure or financial subsidies to allies; it is risky because being seen as an anchor of, or prime mover behind, a balancing coalition might incur the wrath of the potential hegemon, which might be tempted to launch a preventive war to stop the coalition-building or internal balancing in its tracks. It is these costs and risks of balancing that make buck-passing an attractive option for some great powers.

Before considering other strategic options, a word must be said about 'soft balancing'. This term has become popular as a way of explaining the apparent lack of 'hard balancing' against the United States in a unipolar international system. Whereas hard balancing involves military expansion or modernisation, alliance building and technology transfers and/or financial subsidies to allies, 'soft balancing' involves cultivating potential strategic partners; building diplomatic understandings and tacit agreements; cooperation with others in international organisations against the dominant power; and the courting of international public opinion. In other words, 'soft balancing' is usually seen as involving 'soft power' or what E.H. Carr called the 'power of persuasion', rather than military or economic power capabilities. As such, 'soft balancing' is likely to prove of limited effect, and will have, at best, a marginal impact on the behaviour of great powers or the structural dynamics of international politics: as US behaviour during the Iraq crisis of 2002–03 demonstrates, 'hyperpowers' in unipolar global systems are unlikely to be constrained by international

organisations or public opinion when they believe their vital national security interests are at stake.

However, 'soft balancing' can be of significance in two respects: first, it can signal the emergence of low-level security competition; it manifests growing unease and suspicion, but not yet full-blown fear and mistrust. Second, 'soft balancing' can provide the basis for 'hard balancing' by generating the trust and confidence necessary to bare the costs and risks of constructing a balancing coalition. In and of itself, soft balancing is not an effective strategy for constraining a predominant power, but as a manifestation of growing security competition and as the first step in constructing a balancing coalition, it may be of some consequence.[89]

(2) *Buck-passing*: although great powers might be aware of a potential hegemon in their midst and favour the formation of a countervailing balance, they might also hope that other great powers will assume the main burden of forming a new balance of power. In other words, they might seek to 'pass the buck' to others, hoping thereby to benefit as others consume valuable power resources in balancing strategies.[90] An example of this is the failure to form an effective balancing coalition against Nazi Germany in the 1930s: France and Germany looked to the Soviet Union, whilst the Soviet Union hoped to pass the buck back to the Western powers.

(3) *Bandwagoning*: a third strategic option for states confronting a potential hegemon is actually to align with it in order to gain influence, resources and other benefits. An example would be Hungary's alliance with Nazi Germany in the 1930s, which served to facilitate its territorial aggrandisement against Romania and Slovakia. Randall Schweller argues that 'bandwagoning for profit' is actually the dominant tendency for states – particularly revisionist states – seeking to 'increase, not just preserve, their core values and to improve their position in the system'.[91] Bandwagoning is not necessarily a particularly attractive or rational strategy for a great power: 'riding the tiger' of a rising hegemon is inherently risky, because having devoured its other prey, the potential hegemon might have little compunction in turning on its erstwhile bandwagoning ally – who will then find itself bereft of allies and facing an even stronger opponent. Smaller or middle-ranking powers, however, might find bandwagoning an attractive option, particularly if they face other rivals in their specific sub-regional neighbourhood, with whom they are in competition for resources, territory or population. Having a powerful ally, and sharing the spoils of conquest or control with them, can thus be an attractive option for lesser powers, but an ultimately self-defeating one for great powers.

(4) *Aggression*: the final response to a rising hegemon is of course to seek to defeat it militarily. This can include a preventive war, aimed at defeating the potential hegemon before its power resources become too great. War initiation by weaker powers is rare but not unknown, and depends on whether the aggressor believes that it has a superior strategic doctrine with which to achieve a 'blitzkrieg' victory avoiding a more drawn-out war of attrition.[92]

In addition to these four strategies, smaller states have two further options:

(5) *Hiding*: small states can seek to avoid involvement in balancing and counter-balancing coalitions by keeping a low profile, declaring their neutrality, or withdrawing into isolation.[93] Hiding is more possible for states enjoying the advantages of geographical isolation or which are located way from geostrategically important areas: examples would include Switzerland, safely ensconced behind its mountains, or twentieth-century Sweden, situated to the north of the Baltic and surrounded by buffer states offering partial insulation against pressures from great powers.[94]

(6) *Transcendence*: transcendence, Schroeder argues, is a less common but not unknown strategy, and involves attempts to 'surmount international anarchy and go beyond the normal limits of conflictual politics'.[95] Transcendence entails seeking to reduce security competition by establishing institutional structures and procedures for the peaceful management of conflicts. In terms of International Relations theory, transcendence can take a number of forms: the fostering of a Grotian 'society of states'; the establishment of international 'regimes'; and the creation of formal international institutions and organisations. Schroeder, seeking to critique neorealism, argues that strategies involving 'transcendence' have not registered on realism's theoretical radar-screen. This, however, is simply not true: all such strategies are familiar to realists as archetypal liberal-idealist responses to anarchy. The problem with 'transcending' strategies is that, unless they are based on an appropriate balance of power between the great powers, they are unlikely to prove durable. The Concert of Europe was an effective 'transcendence' strategy for as long as it was grounded on great power cooperation for system maintenance in a context of balanced multipolarity. It disintegrated once the underlying balance of power shifted. The League of Nations was another attempt at transcendence: it failed because it was out of synch with the realities of contemporary great power politics.[96]

Transcendence strategies are sometimes articulated by dominant powers within the system as an attempt to institutionalise and codify their hegemonic aspirations: the creation of the UN and the Bretton Woods system are cases of this. At other times, they are proposed by great powers in decline, as a way of preserving their influence on regional and global affairs: an example of this is Gorbachev's *novoe myshlenie* ('new thinking') and his call for a 'common European house'. One interesting and unusual example of a rising great power advocating a transcendence strategy is Hans-Dietrich Genscher, the West German Foreign Minister at the time of German unification. Alone amongst leading NATO ministers, he called for the gradual absorption and replacement of both the Warsaw Pact and NATO by the CSCE (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe), and the creation of a pan-European system of collective security.[97] This idea circulated for a while in post-Cold War Europe and received some support from small and medium-sized states in Central and Eastern Europe and Scandinavia, but was soon dropped in favour of the disbanding of the Warsaw Pact and retaining (and re-branding) NATO.

Middle powers

Transcendence strategies are most usually associated with 'middle powers'. The category of 'middle powers' has been developed to describe states that seek influence but lack the power capabilities required for great power status. They articulate policy perspectives that reflect concerns beyond their immediate national interests and which embody a sense of responsibility for the wider international system, although they lack hard, material power. Consequently, they want to reshape the game of international politics in their favour by emphasising soft power, institutions, international law and moral suasion over hard power, force and coercive diplomacy. Middle powers wish to act as 'good international citizens', emphasising diplomacy, compromise, mediation, peace-keeping and 'human security'.[98] In some cases, they are former great powers (Sweden, Poland); in others, their role as 'middle powers' reflects a concern to assert their separate identity and profile themselves on the international stage (Canada vis-à-vis the USA; Tito's Yugoslavia; Nehru's India; Australia; and Norway). In terms of its current international role, the EU often acts as if it were a freakishly over-sized middle power.

Beneath the moral wrapping, the policies of middle powers are essentially interest-based, status-seeking and self-serving. Middle powers tend to be middle ranking, status-quo oriented states. They seek to transform international politics in ways which will enhance their relative influence and address some of their perceived vulnerabilities. Their role as 'middle powers' therefore reflects, to a considerable degree, their position in the distribution of relative power capabilities.[99] Transcendence can thus be seen as a strategy for middle powers seeking to enhance their influence in international politics, rather than a serious strategic option for great powers.

Structural realism and foreign policy analysis

Although there is some truth in the claim that the theory depicts states as prisoners trapped in an iron cage of structural forces, neorealism is not a determinist view of international politics.[100] The behaviour of great powers is not determined by structural pressures, but neither is it the result of their free will. 'Men make their own history', Marx famously argued in The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, 'but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.'[101] States also make their strategic choices under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past. The structural distribution of power in the international system provides rewards for certain patterns of behaviour and punishes others. It 'shapes and shoves' state behaviour, but it does not determine it. As Waltz has argued, 'international political theory deals with the pressures of structure on states and not with how states will respond to the pressures'.[102] How states

respond to structural pressures depends on a range of domestic political factors, including decision-making competence, ideology and sectional interests. Moreover, in many situations, structural pressures are indeterminate and outcomes are underdetermined, leaving states considerable scope to shape their own future.

States are thus 'situated actors' operating in a 'strategically selective context', as Critical Realists like Bob Jessop and Colin Hay have argued.[103] States are conscious, reflexive and strategic actors, operating in a structured context which favours certain actions over others as a means of realising preferences. The context is 'strategically selective' in that it rewards certain actions and punishes others. Over time, systemically structured outcomes emerge as actors learn how best to pursue their preferences, encouraging states to acquire distinctive foreign policy 'roles' which represent routinised patterns of behaviour. Nonetheless, the systemic environment does not determine state behaviour; rather, it 'predisposes the choices of leaders and the behaviour of states in certain directions and discourages others'.[104]

This opens up space for skilful statecraft to either exploit structural pressures or buck them. The structural distribution of relative power capabilities in the international system sets a range of potential options available to states, and provides incentives for particular foreign and security policy strategies, but it does not predetermine specific outcomes. 'Thinking in terms of systems dynamics does not replace unit-level analysis nor end the search for sequences of cause and effect', Waltz argues. What it does do is 'change the conduct of the search and add a dimension to it'.[105] That great diplomatic virtuoso, the 'White Revolutionary' Otto von Bismarck, once declared that

> A statesman cannot create anything himself. He must wait and listen until he hears the steps of God sounding through events; then leap up and grasp the hem of his garment.[106]

Henry Kissinger expressed the same idea, albeit more prosaically: 'The test of a statesman', he wrote, 'is his ability to recognize the real relationship of forces and to make this knowledge serve his ends.'[107] The European security system will undoubtedly continue to be 'shaped and shoved' by structural pressures, but the future prospects for peace and security in the continent will also depend very much on the ability of European leaders to hear 'God's footsteps' sounding through events and then 'leap up and grasp the hem of his garment'.

4

ANARCHY AND POWER IN THE EUROPEAN SECURITY SYSTEM

> War gives birth and brings death to nations. In the meantime, it never ceases to loom over their existence.
>
> Charles de Gaulle[1]

This chapter examines how the competitive logic of international anarchy and the changing distribution of relative power capabilities has affected the historical evolution of the European security system. The purpose of this examination is to set the scene for the subsequent analysis of the main challenges facing European policy-makers in the context of balanced multipolarity. The chapter begins by defining 'Europe', and then provides a brief structural history of the Westphalian states' system. This focuses on the formation and development of European nation-states, and the systemic determinants of war and peace in Europe. The chapter then considers the implications of the changing structural distribution of power associated with bipolarity and its demise, before concluding with an analysis of the structural dynamics of balanced multipolarity in contemporary Europe.

Defining 'Europe'

'He who speaks of Europe', Otto von Bismarck is reputed to have said, 'is mistaken; it is only a geographical expression.' The term 'Europe' is often used as a synonym for the European Union and its member states. This is factually incorrect: Norway is as 'European' as Finland or Sweden, even though it is not an EU member state. The same is true of Switzerland. 'Europe' is much more than the Union which presumes to speak in its name. In geopolitical terms, it is the northwest peninsula of the Eurasian landmass, MacKinder's 'world island'.[2] Politically and culturally, Europe comprises the intricate patchwork of peoples and states lying between the Atlantic Ocean in the west and the Ural mountains in the east, and between the Barents Sea in the north and the Mediterranean and Bosphorus in the south.

This leaves both Russia and Turkey as countries straddling the boundaries of

Europe. As regards the former, the bulk of its population and economy are located to the West of the Urals, and Russia, with its orthodox Christian heritage, has been much influenced by cultural and political developments in the European heartlands. More importantly, since the early eighteenth century and the Great Northern War, Russia has constituted one of Europe's great powers, even if its identity as a 'European' power coexists uneasily with a pronounced 'Eurasian' dimension.[3] Turkey, on the other hand, is geographically 'European' only by virtue of a thin slither of territory on the north bank of the Bosphorus, and has for most of its history constituted European Christendom's Muslim 'other'. It is not a great power, and has not been one for many centuries. Its importance to the European security system arises from its status as a 'geopolitical pivot'.[4] Lying on the cultural and religious fault-lines between Europe and Asia, it straddles the strategically important regions of the Balkans, the Middle East and the Caucasus. As a Muslim country anchored in NATO, it offers an alternative model of development for post-Soviet Central Asia, and also provides a stabilising presence in the Black Sea region and the southern Balkans. Turkey thus plays an important role in Europe's evolving post-Cold War security system.

Russia and Turkey both constitute integral elements of the European security 'complex'.[5] Both are involved in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), one of the 'bridging organisations' that links EU and NATO member states with their immediate neighbours.[6] Both have close relations with NATO: Turkey as a member, Russia as a privileged interlocutor. And both are important partners for the EU: Turkey as potential member, Russia as huge market and source of energy. This means that, rather than being defined by clearly delineated 'boundaries', the European security system has more amorphous and contested 'borderlands' which lie in the Balkans, Caucasus and Central Asia, and which overlap other regional security systems in the Middle East and Central Asia.

Finally, it should be noted that the USA is also an integral part of the European security system. Although it is geographically separate from the Eurasian peninsula, it plays a significant role in the European balance of power, as it has done since the Second World War. America has important cultural affinities with Europe (although these are weakening) and is bound to the 'old world' through extensive trade and economic ties. Nonetheless, its primary claim to be part of the European security system rests on its role as an 'offshore balancer', a role previously played by the UK.

I A STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE WESTPHALIAN STATES' SYSTEM

A structural realist analysis of the European regional security system highlights three important aspects of its historical evolution that have enduring contemporary relevance. These are: the exceptional diversity and dynamism of Europe's

anarchical states' system; the impact of security competition on the formation and development of European nation-states; and the significance of the structural distribution of power for both the outbreak of major wars and periods of great power cooperation.

European diversity

The structural dynamics of the European security system, and the specific character of European international politics, are a reflection of the distinctive dynamics of its political, economic and social development. Following the disintegration of the *pax Romana* in the fourth and fifth centuries AD, Europe developed as a fragmented and polycentric entity. The political and cultural diversity of the European continent was in part a function of its variegated geography, with a landscape fractured by mountain ranges, large forests, broad rivers and climatic variations. The diversity of political, economic and social institutions that this variegated geography facilitated, along with the complex mix of cultural, ethnic and linguistic groups created by successive waves of nomadic invaders, generated a plethora of competing centres of political and military power. It was this diversity and plurality of competing political communities that distinguished Europe from most other world civilisations, and gave it a distinctive socio-economic dynamic.

By the early modern era, the continent's pluralist and fragmented political structures had stimulated a constant process of economic, scientific and technological innovation and emulation, as political leaders strove to find some power capability that would give them a competitive advantage over their rivals. The result was a ceaseless search for military superiority by individual states, and the fostering of Europe's peculiarly vital, dynamic and assertive societies. The dynamic competitiveness of European states, coupled with the latest military technology, meant that by the sixteenth century Europe's major powers had established a dominant place for themselves in the wider international system. However, in contrast to many other world civilisations, no single state or coalition of states was able to acquire a monopoly on the decisive military technologies of the age with which to achieve political dominance within Europe itself. Consequently, no 'gunpowder empire' emerged in Europe, equivalent to those that existed between 1450 and 1600 in Muscovy, Tokugawa Japan or Mughal India.

Indeed, much of European history can be read as a continual struggle by the leading states in the system to contain the hegemonic aspirations of the most powerful of their number. In contrast to China, India or Japan, the operation of the balance of power prevented the emergence of a regional hegemon.[7] The European states' system that began to take shape within the late medieval order was thus characterised by ceaseless diplomatic activity and frequent wars, within a distinctly multipolar structure. With the final collapse of the 'universal' authority of both the Pope and the Holy Roman Empire in the wars of religion of

the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a new system of international order based on the legal equality of sovereign states began to emerge.

The modern states' system is usually regarded as the legal child of the 1648 Peace of Westphalia. The Westphalian peace not only ended the Thirty Years War, it also created a new diplomatic order based on legally sovereign states. Such states were seen by a growing number of Europeans as the best way to guarantee both domestic stability and security from external threats.[8] From the start, however, power was unequally distributed between these legally equal sovereign entities, with a small number of more powerful states existing alongside a large number of small and medium-sized states. These major powers – or 'great powers', as they came to be known – were intensely competitive, and viewed each other with considerable suspicion and mistrust.

In the absence of a universal authority with the power to ensure compliance with its decisions, order in the Westphalian states' system emerged from a balance of power between the great powers. This was explicitly recognised as the formal basis of European order in the Treaty of Utrecht of 1713. For most of the sixteenth century, Habsburg Spain, France, Austria and England were the leading powers of Europe. In the early seventeenth century, they were briefly joined by Holland and Sweden. Habsburg Spain, the aspirant hegemon of the sixteenth century, lost its great power status by the mid-seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century, Russia replaced Sweden as the dominant power in the Baltic Sea region and joined the ranks of the great powers. By the mid-eighteenth century, Prussia had also secured great power status, largely by dint of its military prowess and the efficiency of its absolutist state. For the next two centuries, Europe's balance of power was to revolve around five great powers: France, Britain, Austria, Prussia/Germany and Russia.[9]

Security competition and European nation-states

Realist theory focuses on the systemic imperatives of security competition and power maximisation in anarchic international systems, and the implications of this for the constitution of order within international politics. In addition, however, realism can also provide a theoretical explanation for the formation and development of the nation-state. Systemic theory highlights the causal link between the anarchic nature of international politics and the nature and composition of the units that comprise the system.[10] Consequently, realism is not simply a theory of the international, it also provides the foundations for a theory of the state.

The central argument advanced here is that the core, defining institutions of the modern state – namely, its fiscal–administrative–military hub – were moulded by the structural pressures of insecurity and uncertainty.[11] Realist theory illuminates the impact of security competition between states on the domestic organisation and development of those states. Survival in a self-help system requires that states maximise their relative power capabilities: one way

to do this is by emulating the 'best practice' of competitors, or seeking innovative ways to enhance one's own power resources.[12] Innovation and emulation are not narrowly focused on military capabilities, but include the economic, political and technological attributes of more successful rivals, given that great power status involves developing strength across a basket of capabilities.

This process of innovation and emulation is not the result of a mechanical, unconscious and determinist process, but rather the consequence of the dynamic and competitive nature of the international system. Anarchy and the self-help imperative generates two key processes: competition and socialisation. States compete to survive and prosper, and therefore are constantly looking for something to give them a competitive edge: this encourages a search for innovation, whether economic, technological, organisational or military. Innovation is a unit-level process of change, and results from effective leadership, political capacities and administrative competence, as well as scientific and technological discoveries. At the same time, systemic pressures encourage states to emulate successful innovators, in order to avoid falling behind in terms of relative power capabilities. The international political system thus generates a potent pressure for socialisation: the structure rewards states that compete successfully, and punishes those that fail to either innovate or emulate. Innovation and emulation, it should be noted, are both forms of 'internal balancing', i.e. generating greater power capabilities from within, rather than by acquiring new allies with which to balance other states.

The systemic imperatives for innovation and emulation are evident from the process of state formation in early modern Europe, a process intimately bound up of with the 'military revolution' of the time. Although the precise location and timing of this revolution is contested by historians, there is broad agreement that changes in military technology, doctrine and organisation associated with the spread of gunpowder precipitated changes in the fiscal–administrative structures of existing polities.[13] In the face of intense security competition and a ceaseless struggle for survival in an anarchic self-help system, states sought to maximise their power through innovation and emulation. The creation of mass infantry-based armies armed with flintlock muskets and trained to employ them effectively was conditional upon effective state structures for raising revenue and coping with the administrative and logistical requirements of the new way of war. As Charles Tilly famously quipped, 'war made the state and the state made war'.[14]

This process of exogenously-driven innovation and emulation can be seen throughout the subsequent history of the Westphalian states' system. The emergence of France in the early eighteenth century as a potential hegemon created a situation of unbalanced multipolarity. As realist theory would expect, this made the 'Age of Reason' a time of incessant emulation and socialisation, as states sought to copy the military practices and fiscal–administrative structures of successful innovators.[15] States that failed to do so soon found themselves disadvantaged – as Poland discovered to its cost in the eighteenth century, when it was

carved up by its more modern, and more successful, great power neighbours.[16] Indeed, the development and consolidation of centralised state power in Europe in the eighteenth century was very much driven by the structural pressures of competition and socialisation in an anarchic, self-help system. This process – known as the *Primat der Aussenpolitik* (the 'primacy of foreign policy') in German historiography – is evident throughout the history of contemporary Europe.[17]

It can be seen from the process of externally-driven domestic modernisation that took place throughout Europe as a result of the French Revolution of 1789. The significance of this event for the structural dynamics of the European states' system was that it produced a more efficient political and administrative state apparatus in France which was able to mobilise resources for war much more effectively than the *Ancien Régime*. Nationalism generated a new sense of social cohesion and political purpose that made possible the creation of mass armies, utilising a mechanism unthinkable for the 'enlightened absolutisms' of the Age of Reason – the *levée en masse* of August 1793. Coupled with the adoption of new tactics and military structures, France's mass conscript armies were soon sweeping all before them. The response of Europe's other great powers was two-fold: both the formation of counter-balancing coalitions, and a conscious strategy of innovation and emulation. Prussia, after the surprise defeat of Jena-Auerstedt in 1806, is a prime example of this, although similar processes occurred in other European states as they strove to emulate the political and military reforms of Napoleonic France.[18]

The nineteenth century witnessed further profound transformations in domestic politics, economics and technology. The two most important catalysts of change were the spread of nationalism and the industrial revolution, which when combined contributed to a process of modernisation that transformed largely rural, agrarian and settled societies into dynamic, urban industrial societies characterised by mass politics and rapid technological innovation. This process of modernisation had, in turn, profound consequences for the nature of warfare, and by the turn of the century European great powers were fielding mass conscript armies, equipped with increasingly destructive weapons, controlled by telegraph and moved by railroads.[19] Throughout this period, there was a ceaseless struggle by all major powers to improve their security by enhancing their power capabilities, either by innovation or by emulation. Until 1870, most countries emulated the French military; after the Prussian victory at Sedan and the defeat of the French Second Empire, it was the army of the German Reich that was the universal source of admiration and emulation. Throughout the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, Britain's naval power was the standard of power and the object of emulation for any country seeking a 'blue-water' naval capability.

But it was not only military capabilities that were copied and where innovation was attempted. All great powers emulated the economic, technological, social and political advances of their peers and rivals. Such emulation was an

important source of 'internal balancing'. It was also very striking that emulation was usually pursued most consciously and with greatest determination after a major military defeat. This can be seen from Prussia after 1806, France after 1870 and Germany after 1918.[20] As with the Prussian reformers after Jena-Auerstedt, French reformers in the Third Republic recognised that Prussia's military successes were not only due to its military training and mastery of the operational level of warfare, but were grounded in its social, political and educational systems. It was these that were the object of emulation, not simply its military organisation. This underlines two aspects of systemic theory: first, that great power status is based on a basket of capabilities, not just military power; and second, that unit-level changes have important system-level drivers arising from the structural pressures of competition and socialisation.[21] As we shall see, systemic factors were a significant catalyst for domestic-level changes in Europe during the 'long peace' generated by Cold War bipolarity.

The structural determinants of war and peace

The causes of war are complex and contingent. Nonetheless, as collective acts which involve a high degree of political and social organisation, wars are shaped by political conditions arising from the structure of the international system. In his influential text, *Man, the State and War*, Kenneth Waltz famously argued that theoretical explanations usually ascribed the causes of war to one of three factors (or 'images'): human nature, the domestic characteristics of states, or the structure of the international system.[22] Realist international theory focuses on the third 'image', on the grounds that it is best able to explain the broad patterns of war and peace in international politics.

Thus realist explanations for the wars of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries would point to the growing power capabilities of France under *Le Roi Soleil* Louis XIV as the key permissive factor leading to the wars of this time. The growing strength of France created a structural environment of unbalanced multipolarity, which is a power configuration primed for conflict. As Realist theory would expect, unbalanced multipolarity proved particularly unstable and war-prone. French hegemonic aspirations were only contained by a series of coalitions between maritime and continental great powers that fought a number of prolonged wars from the late seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth centuries. By the mid-eighteenth century, France's relative power was on the wane, creating a more balanced multipolar order. During this 'Age of Reason', five great powers co-existed in a precarious equilibrium: France, Britain, Austria, Russia and Brandenburg-Prussia. These five powers sought to maintain a balance of power between them based on *Realpolitik* and hard-nosed calculations of the 'national interest', rather than on 'second-order' emotional attachments to transnational, religious causes. For this reason, the eighteenth century constitutes the 'golden age of the balance of power in theory as well as in practice'.[23] It was also the classic era of limited wars, fought by small,

expensive and highly-trained professional armies, for limited political objectives.

With the French Revolution of 1789, Europe entered a period of conflict and turmoil. The short-term effect of the revolution was to weaken French power, precipitating a predatory coalition designed to take advantage of France's temporary incapacity. But once the Republic launched the *levée en masse* and created larger and more effective armed forces, the balance of power swung decisively in France's favour. Napoleon soon proved adept at wielding these new armies to devastating effect, and consequently France was once again able to make a bid for hegemony, creating a structural situation of unbalanced multipolarity. This generated a series of wars and counter-balancing coalitions, as Europe's great powers responded to the threat from France with a variety of strategies from buck-passing and balancing, to bandwagoning.

Balanced multipolarity and the Concert of Europe

With the defeat of Napoleonic France's hegemonic aspirations in 1815, Europe returned to a more balanced multipolar system. The return of balanced multipolarity, coupled with the exhaustion of over two decades of near-continuous warfare, led the great powers to attempt to establish European order on a more consensual basis. The result was the 1815 Congress of Vienna and the 'Concert' system. This represented an effort by Europe's great powers to collectively shape their regional milieu, and reflected the influence of shared 'second order' normative considerations – in this case, a conservative political disposition to maintain the status quo against the disruptive forces of nationalism and democracy.[24] It was therefore a form of *negotiated* order amongst Europe's great powers, which was made possible by a rough power equilibrium between them.[25]

Although the Concert system only formally lasted until 1822, Europe's security order continued to be characterised by balanced multipolarity for the rest of the century. Consequently, the nineteenth century was relatively peaceful.[26] There were no general great power wars for a century after Napoleon's defeat at Waterloo; those wars that did occur were fought to preserve the balance of power or to shift it marginally in favour of one party. The Crimea War (1853–56) was an example of the former, the Wars of Italian and German unification examples of the latter: the War of Italian unification (1859) involved French support for Piedmont at the expense of Austria, which had previously been the sub-regional hegemon in Northern Italy. The Wars for German unification involved a power struggle for influence in Germany, initially between Prussia and Austria (1866), and subsequently between an enlarged Prussia and France (1870). None of these wars drastically altered the balance of power to the extent that they created a situation of unbalanced multipolarity.

Germany and the European balance of power

By the end of the nineteenth century, however, Europe's equilibrium was threatened by the rapid industrialisation of Wilhelmine Germany. The creation of a Prussian-dominated *Kleindeutschland* (a 'small Germany' from which Austria was excluded), followed by its spectacular industrial and economic growth in the last two decades of the nineteenth century, transformed Germany from the 'anvil' to the 'hammer' of the Westphalian states' system.[27] By the early twentieth century, this had once again led to a structural context of unbalanced multipolarity. John Mearsheimer dates the demise of balanced multipolarity to 1903.[28] Whatever the precise date, there is little doubt that in the last decade before the outbreak of the Great War, Germany emerged as the dominant power within the European security order, whose prodigious economy and proven military might constituted a growing threat to the other great powers.

The emergence of Germany as the dominant European great power, situated as it was at the centre of the continent, proved highly destabilising to the European balance of power. It was this structural change in the distribution of relative power capabilities that provided the underlying systemic cause of both the First and Second World Wars. Germany was simply too big and too powerful to be accommodated peacefully with the European states' system. 'What is wrong with Germany', A.J.P. Taylor once wrote, 'is that there is too much of it.'[29] Germany's *Mittellage* – its central geographical location – amplified its influence on European affairs, and made its overweening power a concern to its many neighbours in Europe.

The 'German problem' is therefore explicable in terms of Germany's power capabilities and geostrategic location, rather than some nebulous and distinctive German national 'character'. The transient and ephemeral nature of national stereotypes is well illustrated from Clausewitz's essay in 1807 on 'The Germans and the French'. In his comparison of the two nations, he noted that one was militaristic, and doomed to political 'obedience' by the subject-mentality of its people; the other had a more literary bent, and its hypercritical inhabitants would be unlikely to submit to tyranny. 'The obedient militarists', David Blackbourn notes, 'were, of course, the French, the critically minded literary types the Germans. So much for "national character".'[30]

The underlying cause of the First World War thus lies in the disequilibrium in the European balance of power caused by Germany's rapid industrialisation in the late nineteenth century, which created a situation of unbalanced multipolarity. Germany's military defeat in 1918 was only possible because of the intervention of the United States, acting as an 'off-shore balancer'. The defeat of Germany was followed by an attempt to place order on a more consensual constitutional basis – it failed, as we have seen, because the institutional and legal arrangements created did not correspond to the underlying structure of power. The Treaty of Versailles left Germany aggrieved and resentful, but did not fundamentally erode its economic and industrial capabilities.[31] Weimar Germany

was able to circumvent the restrictions on its military power by secret collaboration with the Soviet Union (despite their ideological differences), which meant that Hitler already had in place the foundations for rebuilding the capabilities of the Wehrmacht after the Nazi *Machtergreifung* ('seizure of power'). By the mid-1930s, it was clear that the European great powers were again on a trajectory heading for war. This period saw extensive buck-passing: Britain sought to leave the task of balancing an ascendant Germany to France; later, when the UK recognised that France could not do this alone, it aligned with France, but both countries hoped to encourage Germany to turn eastwards, leaving the Soviet Union to face the brunt of Nazi power. The Soviet Union, however, sought to pass the buck back to the Western powers, and in 1939 reached an accord with Nazi Germany: in effect, it bandwagoned with Nazi Germany to gain territory at the expense of Poland and the Baltic states. The formation of two rival camps only took place in 1941, two years after the start of the war.

II COLD WAR BIPOLARITY

From unbalanced multipolarity to bipolarity

If the Second World War started in a structural context of unbalanced multipolarity, as it drew to an end, there were clear indications of more profound shifts in the underlying structure of power.[32] Already in late 1944, it was evident that it was the Soviet Army which, in Churchill's words, had 'torn the guts' out of the Nazi war machine.[33] Similarly, it was apparent that after the opening of the second front, it was the Americans who provided the majority of military forces for the campaigns in Normandy, Italy and Germany. The rise of the two great powers flanking the European continent seemed to confirm Alexis de Tocqueville's prescient prediction in the 1830s that America and Russia were together fated to hold in their hands the destinies of the world:

> There are now two great nations in the world which, starting from different points, seem to be advancing towards the same goal: the Russians and the Anglo-Americans.
>
> Both have grown in obscurity, and while the world's attention was occupied elsewhere, they have suddenly taken their place among the leading nations, making the world take note of their birth and of their greatness at the same instant. . . .
>
> Their point of departure is different and their paths diverse; nevertheless, each seems called by some secret design of Providence one day to hold in its hands the destinies of half the world.[34]

Bipolarity and Europe

War and violence, Karl Marx once wrote, is the 'midwife of history'. It is therefore not surprising that the carnage and wholesale destruction of the Second World War acted as the midwife of a profound tectonic shift in the global and regional balance of power. In 1945, Europe lay exhausted and enfeebled after six years of total war. The security order which emerged from the devastation of Hitler's war represented a dramatically new constellation of power relations in Europe. With Germany prostrate, France a pale shadow of its former glory, and victorious Britain financially bankrupt, the old multipolar order faded. In its place, a new structure of power emerged – bipolarity.

In the east, the Red Army occupied Eastern Europe, parts of the Balkans and much of Central Europe, casting an 'iron curtain' across Europe. The Stalinist system – to the surprise of many – had survived the test of invasion and war, and now seemed poised to fill the power vacuum left in Central and Western Europe. To counter this threat, the United States, after some dithering, committed military forces to the defence of Western Europe. The result was a divided Europe and a bipolar security system. The crucial years in the crystallisation of the Cold War were 1947–49. During this period, the United States mobilised its resources for the 'containment' of Soviet power and the defence of the 'free world'. The Truman Doctrine was followed by Marshall Aid; Kennan's famous article on 'containment' spelt out the grand strategy underpinning US policy; communists were expelled from governments in Western Europe; and NATO was formed in April 1949. The Berlin blockade and the 'loss' of China seemed to illustrate the seriousness of the communist threat, and the high stakes involved in the East–West conflict. By the end of the decade, therefore, the crucial political and military structures of the Cold War were firmly in place: Germany was divided; the two flanking powers, the Soviet Union and the United States, were the undisputed arbiters of Europe's fate; and two political, economic and military alliance systems had emerged, which were subsequently to take the form of NATO and the EEC in the West, and the Warsaw Pact and the CMEA in the East.

Equally important was the fact that the emergence of bipolarity was accompanied by the dawning of the nuclear age. At the very moment when the 'Big Three' were beginning their conference in Potsdam (16 July 1945), news reached President Truman that the Manhattan project had culminated in the first successful testing of a new and terrible weapon of immense power, the atomic bomb. The subsequent atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki brought to an end the war in Asia, and introduced a new element of far-reaching import into international politics.[35] Some also argued that it constituted the opening shots of the Cold War. The nuclear revolution certainly marked a huge qualitative leap forward in the destructive capabilities of modern military technology, and seemed to negate Clausewitz's central precept that war was the continuation of politics by other means.[36] Although the full ramifications of the existential threat posed by nuclear weapons were only partially comprehended in the early

Cold War years, nuclear deterrence acted to impose a new and terrifying discipline on the superpowers and their European allies – in effect, slowing down the pace of historical change.[37]

The advent of the Cold War constituted the most significant change in the structure of power in European international politics since the birth of the Westphalian states' system: the transition from a multipolar order to a bipolar one. Bipolarity had six important consequences for the European security system. First, bipolarity proved to be remarkably stable, producing a simpler and more predictable set of great power relationships. In contrast to multipolarity with its multiple conflict dyads, in bipolarity only one major conflict dyad existed; other potential conflicts were effectively smothered by the two superpowers, producing what has been termed bipolar 'overlay'.[38] Moreover, during the course of the East–West conflict, the two superpowers proved themselves to be rational, reflexive actors, capable of 'strategic learning'. Through the experience of crises such as those over Berlin and Cuba, the Soviet Union and the United States evolved an implicit set of 'rules of the game' with which to regulate their competition in an age of nuclear bipolarity. The result was the Hotline Agreement, the Test Ban Treaty, nuclear arms control agreements, détente and the CSCE (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe) process.

Second, nuclear weapons imposed a high degree of discipline, caution and restraint on the behaviour of the two superpowers. Although the strategic and political consequences of nuclear deterrence were not immediately apparent, both superpowers soon came to realise the implications for international crisis management of the immense destructive power they now wielded.[39] Nuclear weapons, in the context of bipolarity, also had significant consequences for domestic political developments in Western Europe. Most importantly, they created the structural conditions in which nationalism could be tamed and the cultivation of multiple identities could begin. Much of the patriotic fervour and intense nationalist emotions that emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were a response to the structural pressures of multipolarity, which generated intense security competition. In this context, as we have seen, a strong sense of national identity was consciously cultivated through educational systems and public culture in order to produce highly-motivated mass conscript armies. Bipolarity and nuclear weapons removed the imperative for this form of political preparation for total war. Although conscription remained in most NATO countries, nuclear weapons removed the strategic imperative to create massive conventional armed forces. Consequently, the systemic pressures that had generated extreme nationalism in Europe were considerably weakened, with the result that nationalist passions were gradually tamed in post-war Western Europe. The military effects of this muted nationalism were exemplified by the Bundeswehr, which was consciously created as an army of a new type composed of 'citizens in uniform', responsible for acts carried out under orders.[40]

The third consequence of bipolarity for the European security system was the division of Germany. This provided a solution – brutal and inelegant though it

was – to the 'German problem', i.e. the problem of how to accommodate Germany's prodigious economy and its considerable material power capabilities within the European balance of power. As we have seen, the Westphalian states' system was able to contain successive bids for hegemony by the Spanish, the Habsburgs and the French; however, the rise of German power in the late nineteenth century upset the European equilibrium, and was only contained by the involvement of the two flanking powers (the United States and Russia) in European affairs. Cold War bipolarity resulted in the division of Germany into two separate states, and the incorporation of each into the alliance blocs of their two superpower patrons.[41] In doing so, however, it linked the East–West conflict to the question of German national self-determination. The fate of Germany – the 'pawn that both sides wished to turn into a queen', in the words of a British Foreign Office memorandum of the time[42] – was subsequently to drive much of the political dynamics of the Cold War in Europe, from the two Berlin crises to *Ostpolitik* in the 1970s and the Euromissiles crisis of the early 1980s.

Fourth, bipolarity considerably weakened the influence of Europe's traditional great powers on regional and world affairs. In the case of the Federal Republic of Germany, its 'semi-sovereign' status was legally enshrined in the Four-Power Agreement on Berlin and implicit in its membership of NATO. For Germany's post-war democratic elite, this was not a major concern, not least because it allowed them to enhance the FRG's relative power by focusing on becoming a successful *Handelsstaat* ('trading nation'), whilst profiling the Bonn Republic as a non-threatening *Zivilmacht* ('civilian power').[43] For France and Great Britain, on the other hand, adjusting to their marginal role in international politics was a much more unpalatable and drawn-out process. The 1956 Suez crisis was crucial in this respect by making both countries painfully aware that they could no longer act like great power imperialists in a world dominated by the superpowers.

Fifth, bipolarity created the structural preconditions for Franco-German rapprochement and a process of institutionalised West European cooperation and integration.[44] The presence of the American 'pacifier' led to a weakening of security competition between Western Europe's major powers and a more relaxed approach to the issue of relative gains.[45] The United States actively encouraged West European cooperation, not least through the provision of Marshall Aid, which was predicated on regional economic cooperation. The integration process originated with the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) in 1951 and gained impetus with the 1958 Treaty of Rome which established the European Economic Community (EEC). Although the European integration process is today portrayed as an idealistic 'peace project' designed to overcome, through supra-national integration and pooled sovereignty, the animosities of war and lay the foundations for a stable peace, the reality is more prosaic. The integration process itself rested on a series of limited and specific economic commitments, primarily involving protectionist measures for French agriculture and a shared market for German industrial products. Rather than weakening

European states, these economic agreements strengthened their power and authority.[46] The key point to note, however, is that the integration process was made possible because of the permissive structural context provided by bipolarity and the American pacifier.

The sixth and final consequence of bipolarity was that it created opportunities for some of Europe's 'middle powers' to manoeuvre within the interstices of the balance of power. In particular, it gave the neutral and non-aligned states in Europe a chance to play a distinctive role in European politics. In times of heightened confrontation in Europe, most of these countries pursued the classic small-state strategy of 'hiding'. However, as East–West tensions eased, they were able to play the role of interlocutors between the blocs, seeking to encourage and institutionalise a process of détente. In particular, in the context of the CSCE process and the MBFR (Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction) talks, they pursued strategies of 'transcendence', seeking to institutionalise and regulate the East–West conflict whilst carving out a distinctive role for themselves.

III FROM BIPOLARITY TO BALANCED MULTIPOLARITY

The end of the Cold War

The end of the East–West conflict was as sudden as it was unexpected. Triggered by a series of seemingly inconsequential decisions – not least, the opening of the Berlin Wall – communist power unravelled rapidly, first in Eastern Europe, and subsequently in the Soviet Union. Underneath the apparently random play of happenstance and contingency, however, the end of bipolarity came about for structural reasons congruent with realist theory.[47] As we have seen, states that fail to successfully innovate or emulate their rivals will inexorably be penalised by the structural pressures of the international system. This was the fate of the Soviet Union and its communist allies. Unable to compete effectively with its more economically dynamic and politically flexible Western rivals, and increasingly overtaken by the United States in the qualitative arms race, Soviet-style state socialism disintegrated at the very moment its reform was attempted.

The failure of Gorbachev's programme of *perestroika* and *glasnost* resulted in a seismic shift in the structure of international power, leading to a subsequent realignment of global and regional power relations. One immediate consequence of this was that the Federal Republic of Germany moved swiftly and opportunistically to enhance its relative power capabilities by absorbing the failed East German state. Chancellor Kohl's Ten Point plan for German unification, which he announced on 24 November 1989 without prior consultation with his allies, was a classic example of an opportunistic power maximisation strategy, which some perceived as a threat to the European balance of power. British Prime

Minister Margaret Thatcher voiced the concerns of many in Europe when she warned that 'a reunited Germany is simply too big and powerful to be just another player within Europe', and that Germany is 'by its very nature a destabilizing rather than a stabilizing force in Europe'.[48] Her fears were shared by Germany's immediate neighbours, France and Poland. Poland had particular cause for concern given the refusal of Chancellor Kohl to confirm that a united Germany would accept the legitimacy of the Oder-Neisse line, the border between Poland and the GDR. French President François Mitterrand and much of the French political elite were also deeply troubled by the speed at which German unification was taking place and its implications for their influence in Europe.

However, despite tentative discussions about a renewed Anglo-French *entente*, French decision-makers recognised the potential costs and risks involved in an explicit balancing strategy, and suggested instead that like Gulliver, a united Germany could be tied down within an 'ever closer union'. The Soviets were also uneasy with German unification, but realised they could do little to stop it. Consequently they 'bandwagoned' with Bonn in order to secure the best deal possible for themselves (which involved large payments of Deutschmarks and security guarantees about the future size of the Bundeswehr). The United States was much more supportive of German ambitions, believing that with a united Germany firmly anchored in NATO, the USA would be able to develop a 'partnership in leadership' with the dominant power in the new Europe.[49]

As we shall see, the logic of power maximisation was subsequently to lead to the expansion of Euro-Atlantic institutions into Central and Eastern Europe, as Western powers (led by the United States and Germany) sought to take advantage of Russian weakness and fill the power vacuum left by the implosion of the Soviet Union. On a smaller scale, opportunistic power maximisation strategies were also pursued by sub-state actors in the Balkans, seeking to take advantage for the pealing back of bipolar 'overlay'. In general, however, the 1990s were an interregnum, as European states adjusted to the changed structure of the regional international system, and as Europe's great powers re-learnt old roles or acquired new ones.

The interregnum

The structural distribution of power in the international system is the single most important exogenous variable determining state behaviour: consequently, the end of bipolarity and the reconfiguration of power relationships in Europe and the wider international system was a change of historic importance. With the disintegration of the old bipolar structure of power, new systemic pressures on state behaviour began to assert themselves. The full implications of this structural transformation were not immediately apparent to most of the actors involved, however, and there was considerable lag in foreign policy behaviour

as the major powers responded slowly and incrementally to changes in the incentive structure afforded by the international system. The 1990s thus constituted a period of transition, during which Europe's great powers adjusted gradually to the new constellation of power.

One reason for the delayed response to the end of bipolarity was the largely peaceful and consensual manner in which the East–West conflict ended: the experience of war and destruction often accelerates the process of strategic learning, and results in more rapid shifts in state behaviour. The generally peaceful character of the *annus mirabilis* both fuelled liberal-idealist hopes for a 'new world order', and delayed the process of adjusting to the changed international context. International political systems, it should be noted, do not operate mechanistically and deterministically. Changes in the constellation of relative power capabilities do not translate automatically and immediately into new patterns of state behaviour. Structural change is effected by agents, who are 'situated actors'. These actors need time to understand the significance of structural changes in their external environment, and to re-orientate their grand strategies and national role conceptions accordingly. As we have seen, these self-conscious reflections on praxis give foreign policy greater coherence, but also channel behaviour along particular 'grooves'. Grand strategies change as a result of 'critical junctures', but only following an often painful process of self-reflection and strategic learning.[50] Neorealist theory cannot predict how long it will take for situated actors to understand the changed incentive structure afforded by the international system, because it cannot account for either diplomatic virtuosos or the congenitally inept. What is striking, however, is that over time most European states have behaved as rational, reflexive and strategically-orientated actors, responding as the theory would expect to structural changes in the European security system.

Balanced multipolarity in Europe

The gradual and incremental response by the major powers in the European security system to the structural changes brought about by the end of Cold War bipolarity led some leading Realist scholars to conclude that not much of real consequence had actually changed in Europe. Both Kenneth Waltz and John Mearsheimer, for example, argued that Europe remained bipolar, with Russia and the United States as the major powers and the region's principal rivals. Mearsheimer focused on the contingent balance of power in the European security system, and suggested that with a future strategic disengagement of the USA from Europe (which he regards as a rational response to the end of the Cold War), the region would move from benign bipolarity to *unbalanced multipolarity*, 'the most dangerous kind of power structure', with Germany as the most likely potential hegemon.[51] Waltz, on the other hand, examined the global structure of power, and reached rather less alarmist conclusions: he argued that international politics was characterised by 'modified bipolarity', and was therefore

relatively stable. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Waltz argued, 'bipolarity endures, but in an altered state' because 'militarily Russia can take care of itself'.[52]

Such assessments over-estimate both the influence of the United States on the European region and the relative power capabilities of both Germany and Russia. They are also based on a rather one-dimensional understanding of power and the capabilities of great powers. As Waltz elsewhere acknowledges, great power ranking does not rest on any one power attribute, but on a combination of capabilities, including geographic size, population, resource endowment and competent government. By such criteria, Germany, France and Britain are equal candidates for great power status alongside Russia. Mearsheimer's analysis focuses on one specific hypothetical scenario: the strategic disengagement of the USA from Europe and the subsequent transition from 'benign bipolarity' to 'unbalanced multipolarity'. The scenario he discounts is, in fact, the one that has transpired: Europe has moved from bipolarity to balanced multipolarity.

The emergence of *balanced multipolarity* is crucial to understanding the dynamics of post-Cold War European security. The fact that contemporary Europe is characterised by balanced rather than unbalanced multipolarity has been largely overlooked by many American realists. They have usually assumed that bipolarity will be followed by unbalanced multipolarity, and have premised their analyses of the prospects for intense security competition, nuclear proliferation and the collapse of multilateral institutions on this assumption. Such outcomes are possible in unbalanced multipolarity, but in multipolar systems characterised by a rough balance of power between the major actors, intense security competition is less likely, and consequently a degree of cooperation to address shared security concerns and to collectively shape the regional milieu is possible.

In contemporary Europe, none of the great powers can make a credible bid for hegemony. Although the United States is the only remaining global superpower, and is currently basking in its 'unipolar moment', it does not exercise hegemonic power in Europe. The USA is the regional hegemon in the Western hemisphere, but in Europe it acts as an 'offshore balancer'. Even in this role, however, its influence has been declining, as transatlantic relations have experienced a steady process of continental drift. The evidence indicates that transatlantic relations are no longer as important to either side as they were during the Cold War. America's leaders have devoted much less time to managing the transatlantic alliance because the need to do so is no longer keenly felt, and because other regions are more pressing, problematical or rewarding. As America's military footprint in Europe has grown smaller, its political influence has also declined. In the place of the old transatlantic alliance, a new and more differentiated pattern of 'multiple bilateralism' is emerging. In some cases, America cultivates strategic partnerships with key allies (like Britain or Poland); in others, it cooperates on specific policy issues – even with its would-be nemesis France, where it has worked closely on policy towards Lebanon and Syria.

Germany is often portrayed as multipolar Europe's potential hegemon. Certainly, German power in the first half of the twentieth century proved impossible to accommodate within the prevailing balance of power, which was why the Cold War division of Germany was quietly welcomed by many in East and West. However, as we shall see in Chapter 7, unification has not created an economic superpower, or a great power capable of making a credible bid for regional hegemony. Upon unification, the German economy was only about three-quarters of that of France and the UK combined. Throughout the nineties, Germany bore the costs of unification, which proved much higher than expected. Since then, the German economy has faced a number of deep-seated structural problems, which have impaired its productivity and capacity for innovation. Militarily, Germany punches below its weight, given the slow pace of military reform and repeated cuts in its defence budget. Nonetheless, throughout the 1990s, Germany quietly re-learnt its former great power role, and began to assume the responsibilities that great power status entails. The 'Berlin Republic' has largely shed the modesty, restraint and 'reflexive multilateralism' of the Bonn Republic, and is now willing and able to assert its national interests and act as a 'normal' great power. Despite this, a 'Fourth Reich' is not on the cards: Germany may, once again, be a great power, but it does not dominate Europe and is not strong enough to make a viable grab for regional hegemony.

Russia is the other potential catalyst of further structural change in the relative distribution of power in the continent. Mearsheimer posits two scenarios: either its economy collapses, removing Russia from the ranks of the European great powers, and thereby enhancing Germany's relative power capabilities; or Russia experiences a dramatic improvement in its fortunes, and emerges as a potential hegemon on the back of rapid economic growth and military modernisation.[53] Although neither scenario can be completely discounted, it has been said of Russia that the worst one fears never seems to happen, but neither does the best one hopes for ever come to pass. With the break-up of the Soviet Union, Russia is back in its seventeenth-century borders, physically separated from Central Europe by a belt of small and medium-sized states – most notably Ukraine. Its economy has revived since the trough of the early nineties, but it has not performed as well as many expected. Russia's military may be large, but its quality is poor, as its dismal performance in Chechnya demonstrated. Russia is undoubtedly a European – indeed, a Eurasian – great power, but it is not a potential European hegemon.

Europe's two other great powers, Britain and France, have also been adjusting to the new balance of power created by the end of the Cold War. Together with Germany, Russia and the United States, these five states comprise the great powers in the European security system. Contemporary Europe is thus characterised by balanced multipolarity, with a regional security system composed of five great powers (three continental great powers, and two 'off-shore' balancers).

The challenge of multipolarity

In the interregnum of the 1990s, the changing topography of power initially proved hard to discern. The full implications of the end of bipolarity only became evident in the early twenty-first century, with America's response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks and Europe's divisions over the Iraq War. These two events illuminated the new constellation of power relations: the emergence of America's *unipolar* moment globally, and of *balanced multipolarity* in Europe. September 11 did not fundamentally change global politics, but it certainly changed American foreign and security policy, and given the power of the United States, this had ramifications for international politics the world over.[54] The US reformulation of its national security strategy to embrace unilateral preventive wars, and the Bush Administration's increased willingness to use military force to reshape international order, forced its European allies to reconsider both their relations with Washington and their own security strategies.

The diplomatic drama which preceded the American-led invasion of Iraq in March 2003 brought these issues to a head, and threw into sharp relief the changed structure of power relations in post-Cold War Europe. It illuminated a number of consequences of bipolarity's demise: the extent to which continental drift had weakened transatlantic relations in the 1990s; the hollowness of EU claims to have a 'Common Foreign and Security Policy' of any real substance; the rival national interests of Europe's major powers; the role of Russia as a full participant in Europe's multipolar diplomacy; Germany's emergence as a 'normal' great power and its pivotal position in the regional balance of power; and the changing role of military force in the context of balanced multipolarity.

With the peeling back of Cold War overlay, a much more complicated and differentiated pattern of diplomatic interactions has emerged in Europe. Multipolarity is generally less stable and predictable than bipolarity, and is characterised by greater fluidity in political and strategic interactions within the regional security system. The crucial issue is whether the multipolar system contains a potential hegemon: when multipolarity is unbalanced by the existence of such a potentially dominant power, security competition is likely to be intense. When there is a rough equilibrium between the great powers in a multipolar order, however, concerns with relative gains are less keenly felt, and prospects for cooperation to further shared interests and tackle common problems are better. Balanced multipolar systems therefore tend to be characterised by complex patterns of cooperation and conflict.

Contemporary Europe exhibits many of the expected features of a balanced multipolar system. More intricate patterns of interaction have developed, not least in the form of trilateral diplomacy between shifting constellations of partners: France, Germany and Russia; Britain, France and Germany; France, Germany and Poland; and Germany, France and Spain. The cohesion of the two key institutional bulwarks of the Euro-Atlantic community has also weakened with the advent of multipolarity: NATO is struggling to define a role for itself,

having been effectively sidelined by the United States in its 'war on terror'; more significantly, the EU is in crisis after the collapse of the constitution, and enlargement has spelt an end to dreams of an 'ever closer union'. Economic nationalism is also increasingly in evidence in a number of EU member states, whilst conflicts between Britain and France are indicative of major unresolved differences on the future of the EU. Despite liberal-idealist claims that the integration process is creating a 'post-modern polity', competing national interests between sovereign states still drive the international politics of Europe.[55]

More positively, there has been a concerted effort – led by the major powers – to collectively shape Europe's 'new neighbourhood'. One vehicle for this has been the EU: the Commission has played a significant role, but political and strategic direction has been set by the European Council, within which the largest member states have a dominant voice. The EU has been used by its member states – particularly its three great powers, Britain, France and Germany – as an instrument of collective milieu-shaping in the post-communist East, and to a lesser extent (and with less success), in the Mediterranean and the greater Middle East. NATO has also been used for milieu-shaping, particularly in terms of defence and security sector reform in the post-communist East, and more recently in Afghanistan. Even so, Europe's great powers have not been averse to by-passing the EU and establishing new bodies for consultation and policy coordination when necessary: a prime example of this is the Contact Group, which included the five European great powers plus Italy (given its geopolitical proximity to the Balkans).

At the same time, however, even balanced multipolar systems are likely to experience some degree of security competition, given the number of potential conflict dyads and the structural incentives for power maximisation. Security competition in the 1990s was relatively muted, although the skirmishing between NATO countries and Russia over NATO enlargement and the Kosovo War was evidence that conflicting interests remained. Despite threats to initiate balancing policies (such as deploying additional conventional and nuclear forces to Kaliningrad), Russia's weakness prevented it from reacting more robustly. The continuing conflicts over the political future of Ukraine and Belarus, however, are examples of renewed security competition between a reviving Russia and the Western powers. Growing security competition between Russia and the West is also apparent in Central Asia and the Caucasus, and over Moldova and the Baltic states (particularly Latvia and Estonia).

Conclusion

Despite worries that the end of bipolarity would be followed by a reversion to past patterns of chronic instability and intense security competition, this has not happened. The reason lies not with globalisation, integration, the spread of democracy or a profound transformation in the very nature of international politics, as liberal-idealists argue, but with the structural distribution of power and

the systemic imperatives it generates. Rather than reverting 'back to a future' of unbalanced multipolarity, the post-Cold War European security system is characterised by balanced multipolarity. In this structural context, a form of 'Concert' diplomacy has developed, similar to that which emerged in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars.[56] It is this structural environment that is generating complex patterns of cooperation and conflict, and which has limited the emergence of intense security competition.

Nonetheless, Europe is not simply 'primed for peace'. One problem is that the pace of economic competition and technological innovation in contemporary capitalism is high, and may well result in differential rates of growth. This might alter the distribution of relative power capabilities, undermining the regional equilibrium and creating a more unbalanced multipolar system, with all the dangers of conflict that such a development implies. Even if the distribution of power remains broadly balanced, multipolar systems require considerable diplomatic finesse and prudent behaviour if conflicts of interests between multiple dyads are to be peacefully managed. This is problematic, because all great powers have an interest in maximising their power if favourable opportunities present themselves. Multipolarity will therefore present European decision-makers with a complex and challenging environment. In the early twenty-first century, four major challenges have emerged: America's unipolar moment, and its implications for transatlantic relations; the future of the European integration process; Germany's emergence as Europe's *Zentralmacht*; and Russia's future place in post-Cold War Europe. These four issues are at the heart of the multipolar challenge facing contemporary Europe.

5

TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS AND CONTINENTAL DRIFT

> America is a large, friendly dog in a very small room. Every time it wags its tail it knocks over a chair.
>
> Arnold Toynbee[1]

This chapter examines the role of the United States in the European security system and the changed structural dynamics of transatlantic relations. It begins by examining transatlantic relations in the context of Cold War bipolarity, then analyses the implications of global unipolarity for contemporary American grand strategy. This analysis focuses on the role of the United States in Europe's post-Cold War security system, and examines how the combination of global unipolarity and regional multipolarity affects American policy towards Europe. The chapter also considers how these structural pressures have impacted upon the NATO alliance, and examines the trajectory of transatlantic relations in the early twentieth century. It concludes by arguing that the United States has pursued a grand strategy designed to maximise its power, not just its security – a finding that accords with the deductive logic of offensive realism.

I US POWER

The American colossus

In terms of its relative power capabilities, the USA is without doubt the world's pre-eminent power, bestriding the world like a colossus. The disintegration of the USSR and the consequent collapse of the post-war bipolar international order has left the USA as the dominant international power – a hyperpuissance, in the words of former French Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine. John Bolton, the US Ambassador to the UN, once joked that there should be only one permanent veto-wielding member of the UN Security Council, the United States, 'because that's the real reflection of the distribution of power in the world – the United States'.[2]

The United States of America disposes of an imposing array of relative power capabilities across a range of key indices. With a GDP of $11.7 trillion and a growth rate of 4.4 per cent in 2004, the USA possesses the largest and most dynamic economy in the international system, providing the engine of global economic growth. Concerns have been voiced about the federal budget deficit and the trade deficit, but with strong business and consumer demand, coupled with a high degree of technological innovation and a flexible labour market, the outlook for the US economy remains promising.[3] These substantial economic foundations provide the basis for America's preponderant military power. The USA now spends more on defence than the next fourteen countries combined.[4] A significant slice of US defence expenditure is devoted to research and development, giving the USA a commanding lead in military technology and allowing it to remain at the forefront of the 'Revolution in Military Affairs'. US military doctrine aspires to what is termed 'full spectrum dominance': in other words, the USA strives to military pre-eminence in all categories of armed conflict, from strategic nuclear deterrence and high-intensity mechanised warfare, to what Rudyard Kipling termed the 'savage wars of peace'.[5]

Since the end of the Cold War, and particularly since 11 September 2001, the United States has strengthened its global military profile. Having acquired new bases in Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Horn of Africa and the Middle East, the US military is now based in or close to all geostrategically significant areas of the world, giving it the capability to project coercive power to almost any corner of the globe. US special forces operate either openly or discretely in 125 countries.[6] The USA also disposes of the largest and most powerful blue-water navy in the world, which, with its 12 carrier battle groups, dominates the world's oceans. Furthermore, the USA leads in the emerging arena of cyber warfare. American military power is thus felt in all corners of the globe and reaches from the depths of the ocean to the outer reaches of space.

This awesome combination of material power capabilities is buttressed by America's considerable reserves of 'soft power'.[7] Despite – or perhaps because of – its marked inequalities of power and wealth, American society is exceptionally dynamic and vibrant. For many, it remains a land of boundless opportunities, and the embodiment of the principles of capitalist democracy and individual freedom. On the back of a globalising world economy, American culture and values exert a strong international influence, from Hollywood and Coca-Cola to Rap and Rock 'n roll. These substantial reserves of 'soft power' have been eroded by the 'war on terror', but remain a potent source of US influence.[8] The USA has a well-functioning political system (albeit, at times, a somewhat fissiparous and polycentric one), capable of mobilising and deploying America's power resources to considerable effect. This political system rests on firm foundations of political legitimacy, national identity and social cohesion. In short, the USA enjoys a considerable comparative advantage in the three key indicators of power identified by E.H. Carr: economic, military and the power over opinion.[9]

Not since the Roman Empire in its heyday, it is often remarked, has any state enjoyed such a marked advantage in economic strength and coercive military might over its friends and rivals. Indeed, the concept of 'empire' has enjoyed a marked revival, both by critics and proponents of an assertive US grand strategy. Once fashionable with the radical left, particularly during the Vietnam War, the concept of 'empire' has now been adopted with polemical relish by the neo-conservative right, who argue that the USA is – and should be – an 'empire'.[10] Yet the USA is neither an empire ('evil' or otherwise) nor a global hegemon. American power is markedly different from that of the Roman Empire in one crucial respect. Whereas Rome was able to establish its hegemony within a broadly contiguous regional arena around the Mediterranean Sea (which constituted much of the 'known world'), American power is concentrated in a continent geographically separated from other great powers in other regions. America also eschews direct control of foreign territory, in contrast to previous imperial powers such as Britain or France. America is undoubtedly the hegemonic power in the Western hemisphere, but because of the 'stopping power of water', it does not exercise global hegemony.[11] Its preponderant military power means that the USA is able to command much of the 'global commons', and to act as the 'indispensable nation' in many regions of the world.[12] In that sense, America is a 'hyperpower' enjoying a 'unipolar moment', with no obvious rival on the horizon. But America is neither an imperial power nor a global hegemon, and – most importantly for the purposes of this study – it does not exercise hegemonic power in Europe.

II BIPOLARITY

Bipolarity and transatlantic relations

The transformation of the USA from a rather unremarkable great power sitting on the margins of world affairs in the Western hemisphere to global superpower status was occasioned by the Second World War. America was the only major power to prosper from the war, enjoying a dramatic increase in productive capacity and living standards. At the war's end, it had 12.5m personnel under arms, the largest navy in the world, a powerful strategic air force and sole possession of the most awesome weapon ever produced by human ingenuity – the atomic bomb.[13]

The emergence of the USA as one of two superpowers in a bipolar world order generated a new American grand strategy, the central organising concept of which was 'containment'. For Europe's traditional great powers, this involved a subordinate position in a new institutional architecture and a web of economic and strategic relations constructed by the United States.[14] The key institutional buckle of transatlantic relations was the NATO alliance, which provided American security guarantees to Western Europe involving extended nuclear

deterrence and the stationing of US conventional military forces in Europe. In effect, America adopted the UK's former role as an 'off-shore balancer', although with a much stronger and more institutionalised military presence in Western Europe than that traditionally provided by Britain. In providing security guarantees to its European allies, America also served as Europe's 'pacifier', effectively suppressing security competition between its NATO allies.[15] This pacifying role was largely latent in terms of France and Germany, but was more actively manifest in its management of recurrent conflicts between Turkey and Greece.

Transatlantic relations were based on three pillars, corresponding to Carr's three dimensions of power: military, economic and 'power over opinion'. The most important pillar of the transatlantic relationship was military: threatened by Soviet conventional and nuclear forces, America and its European allies shared a common existential security concern which overrode other considerations. The economic foundations of the transatlantic alliance were laid by the Bretton Woods system and Marshall Aid, both of which facilitated deepening economic interdependence between America and Western Europe. The United States also played an influential role in encouraging a process of West European integration, in order to ensure a firm economic basis for the strategic partnership.[16] Finally, America and its European allies shared common political, ideological and normative values, which were reinforced by America's cultural penetration of European societies.

Throughout the Cold War, transatlantic relations were wracked by repeated crises: Suez in 1956, the French withdrawal from NATO's integrated military command, burden-sharing and the 'Euromissiles' controversy.[17] Nevertheless, in the face of a shared existential threat, both sides strove hard to minimise their differences and accentuate their common interests. NATO remained the bedrock of transatlantic relations, and economic rivalries and cultural differences were subordinated to shared strategic considerations. Both sides devoted considerable time, energy and resources to managing transatlantic relations and reducing the inevitable friction generated by anarchic international systems.

The bipolar structure of power had a number of important consequences for America's approach to transatlantic relations. First and foremost, it meant that the key to containing the perceived hegemonic ambitions of its superpower rival was *internal balancing*, not alliance building. Balancing Soviet power was primarily a function of US nuclear and conventional capabilities, which were internally generated. The contribution of the allies to NATO was not unimportant, but it was not the key to effective balancing. For this reason, the defection of allies – such as France from NATO, or Romania from the Warsaw Pact – was not as calamitous as it would have been in a multipolar order, where external balancing (in the shape of alliance formation) is the key. Second, despite the importance of internal balancing, successive US administrations nevertheless devoted much diplomatic effort to alliance management, and at times pursued a policy of self-restraint to reassure its allies and partners of its good intentions. In

the context of the East–West conflict, Washington was keen to mollify and accommodate the interests of its allies, and to be seen to consult and listen, even if the USA had its own way more often than not. Third, once the formative conflicts had passed, the East–West conflict generated a relatively stable pattern of superpower relations, as both sides learnt the 'rules of the game'.[18] This stability manifested itself in a series of superpower agreements over crisis management and the strategic nuclear arms race, along with periods of reduced tension between the two alliance systems. Nonetheless, the stability and predictability of East–West relations in Europe did not prevent 'proxy wars' in the Third World.

Most importantly, however, bipolarity gave coherence and clarity of purpose to American grand strategy, which enjoyed broad bipartisan support for over 40 years. The Cold War allowed the United States to flex its superpower muscles and shoulder the primary responsibility for shaping the contours of economic, political and strategic relations within the West. With the end of bipolarity, however, this clarity of purpose and unity of action began to unravel, generating a major foreign policy debate on the role of the USA in the 'new world order'.

III UNIPOLARITY

Unipolarity and global politics

American debates on its role in the international system are as old as the Republic itself. With the loss of its superpower rival, however, America faced another period of intense debate on the purposes and strategic direction of its foreign policy. The debate revolved around a devastatingly simple question, the implications of which were profound: what was the role of America in a world without a peer competitor?

The collapse of the Soviet Union left the United States as the predominant international power, and created a rare global power configuration termed 'unipolarity'. As we have seen, unipolarity is distinct from global hegemony: the United States is a regional hegemon in the Western hemisphere, and faces no peer rival on the global stage, but it still operates in an anarchic international system in which great powers exist in other regions. The consequences of unipolarity for the United States are twofold: first, it enjoys a higher degree of security than other great powers, with few existential threats to its own survival; second, because of its relatively benign regional environment, its command of the 'global commons' and its substantial power projection capabilities, it has considerable freedom of manoeuvre in international politics.[19] Unlike other great powers, it is not constrained by regional rivals, nor does it have to respond to, counter and outwit a rival superpower, as it did in a bipolar international system.

These systemic factors mean that the United States can be selective in what its does, and can afford not to act immediately when faced with emerging threats to international order. On the other hand, it is also free to pursue 'fancies

abroad', going in search of dragons to slay and noble causes to fight.[20] As a hyperpower in a unipolar global system, the USA may easily be tempted to act unilaterally, and faces less pressure to cultivate and sustain strategic partnerships and alliances. In the eyes of its allies and rivals, this means that the United States might at times be viewed as capricious, unreliable, inattentive, arrogant, rash and self-indulgent, swinging erratically from laziness to hyperactivity.

Amongst American realists, the debate on unipolarity has largely been preoccupied with two issues. First, how durable is America's unipolar 'moment'; and second, will other great powers form a balancing coalition against the unipolar hyperpower?[21] Neither of these questions merits more than a brief response, and neither poses intractable problems for Realist theory. As regards the first, the uneven pace of economic, technological and scientific change means that relative power capabilities between the United States and other great powers are bound to change over time, particularly in the context of a globalised economy with an open trading system, which, by its very nature, encourages a diffusion of economic policies, new technologies and innovative production techniques. New great powers seem destined to emerge, and some existing great powers will inevitably prove capable of successful emulation and innovation.[22] Nonetheless, the United States enjoys a significant margin of advantage over potential rivals, and thus it seems likely that America's unipolar status – like that of the UK in the mid-nineteenth century – will persist for at least the next few decades. Consequently, the assumption here is that American unipolarity will continue well into the twenty-first century, even if this unipolar moment is unlikely to exist indefinitely.

As regards the question of countervailing balances, when and how these might occur depends on whether one expects balances to form on a global or regional basis. As noted in Chapter 4, analyses of power configurations must be specified temporally and spatially. States are primarily concerned with regional threats to their survival and security, not with concentrations of power in far-distant continents. Consequently, the emergence of the United States as a hyperpower in a unipolar international system will not necessarily generate immediate and clear-cut systemic pressures leading to a global (or 'universal') counterbalancing coalition. Great powers such as Germany, Russia, China and Japan are unlikely to coalesce in opposition to the United States because they face more pressing regional security concerns, and in a number of cases they are more worried about regional rivals than with the capriciousness of the unipolar hyperpower. Because these great powers are primarily concerned with maintaining a contingent balance of power in their regional security system, America – if it so chooses – can position itself as an 'off-shore balancer', allying for example with Japan against China, or with Germany against a recidivist Russia. America may be subject to regional counter-balancing coalitions in geopolitically delineated security systems, but a global countervailing coalition is much harder to envisage. On some specific issues, ad hoc diplomatic alliances may form against particular American foreign policies, as they have over the Iraq War, control of

the Internet or global climate change, but these do not necessarily signify the emergence of permanent countervailing balancing coalitions on a global scale. Soft balancing might become more prevalent if the USA persists in pursuing unilateralist strategies and preventive wars without due regard to the concerns of other great powers. Nonetheless, 'hard' balancing coalitions on a global scale remain unlikely in the foreseeable future. Great powers focus on their immediate regional environment, and consequently power balances are most likely to form regionally rather than globally.

'Defensive' and 'offensive' unipolarity

The more interesting question is how the structural transformation of power associated with the demise of bipolarity and the emergence of unipolarity will affect American grand strategy and its relations with Europe. How will a unipolar constellation of power 'shape and shove' US behaviour, and what incentive structure does it present to decision-makers in Washington? As noted above, the United States enjoys both a relatively secure external environment and greater freedom of manoeuvre. The question arises: how will America respond to this uniquely favourable situation?

The answer to this depends on one's assumptions about what motivates state behaviour: are great powers security maximisers, concerned primarily with ensuring their security and survival, or are they power maximisers, rarely content with the power they have, and ceaselessly and opportunistically seeking to maximise their relative power capabilities? The theoretical propositions made about state behaviour within anarchic realms gives rise to two very different sets of deductive reasoning about contemporary American grand strategy, which are here termed 'defensive' and 'offensive' unipolarity.

Defensive unipolarity: Deductive logic would suggest that were the United States simply a 'defensive positionalist', concerned with maximising its security not its power, it would pursue a grand strategy that avoided overseas entanglements and the pursuit of 'primacy' within the international system, given the costs involved and the risks entailed.[23] With its national security guaranteed by the 'stopping power of water' and an assured second-strike nuclear capability, the United States would be free to address domestic problems whilst seeking to improve its competitive position within the global economy. Secure in the Western hemisphere, the United States would have limited interest in committing substantial resources to milieu-shaping in the wider international system. The USA might act as an 'off-shore balancer' in the most literal sense of the term, i.e. with no permanent stationing of military forces in a region, but with a commitment to re-engage if a serious threat emerges that no other regional great power could balance against.[24] US grand strategy would thus fall between outright *isolationism* and *selective engagement*.[25] The military posture of 'defensive unipolarity' would involve a slimmed-down military, a reduced emphasis on power projection and a beefed-up national missile defence system. The US navy

would guard the seas around the continent and protect key sea lines of communication (SLOC), whilst the air force would provide an instrument of deterrence and strategic coercion.

For Europe, the consequences of a defensive unipolar strategy would be further continental drift and heightened regional security competition. America's security commitment to Europe would weaken, particularly in a context of regional balanced multipolarity. As for NATO, it would be a pale shadow of its former self, providing a limited forum for transatlantic dialogue and joint military exercises, but without the force structures necessary to give substance to Article V security guarantees. America would be unlikely to carry the costs of non-Article V 'crisis response operations', leaving the Europeans to tackle security crises in and around their 'near abroad'. US–European relations would tend to be dominated by economic and trade concerns, where rivalry, not cooperation, would be most in evidence.

Offensive unipolarity: On the other hand, were the United States concerned with maximising its power as well as its security, the deductive logic of structural realism would suggest a very different course for US grand strategy under conditions of unipolarity. It would expect America to pursue a much more assertive and ambitious grand strategy, designed to capitalise on and prolong its unipolar moment. As a power maximiser, the United States would not merely seek to prevent the rise of potential hegemons in other regions, it would also seek to constrain the influence of existing great powers, to expand its influence into regions of strategic importance (despite the risk of security competition with regional great powers), and to consolidate its military and economic predominance in the international system by technological and scientific innovation. In short, it would pursue a strategy of *primacy*, aimed at creating a *pax Americana* based on predominant US power. This would involve an aggressive policy of 'milieu-shaping' designed to spread values and practices conducive to American influence, particularly in regions of strategic importance. The goal of primacy would entail using American military power not just for deterrence and defence, but also coercively and offensively as an adjunct to US diplomacy and for the more assertive forms of 'milieu-shaping' (i.e. regime change). This would require a military posture designed to ensure that America can maintain and enhance its power projection capabilities and fulfil its aspiration to achieve 'full spectrum dominance'.

For Europe, offensive unipolarity would be much more divisive than defensive unipolarity, forcing all countries to choose between balancing against or bandwagoning with the USA. New NATO members such as Poland would welcome US engagement in European affairs, particularly if this involved constraining Russian ambitions in Eastern Europe and balancing against Franco-German aspirations for regional leadership. If it were to pursue a power maximisation strategy, America would have an interest in preserving a slimmed-down NATO as a tool-box for US-led 'coalitions of the willing', whilst minimising the risks of 'entrapment' inherent in Article V commitments. The USA

would also be expected to maintain military bases in Europe both as a means for power projection in neighbouring regions and for political influence in European affairs.[26]

US foreign policy after the Cold War

The purpose of the foregoing discussion has been to explicate the deductive logic of defensive and offensive realism in order to develop theoretical propositions about US grand strategy and transatlantic relations under conditions of global unipolarity. The task now is to examine the key trends in American foreign policy after the demise of bipolarity with a view to deciding whether the main thrust of its grand strategy accords best with the logic of defensive or offensive realism.

To cut straight to the chase: the evidence suggests that, faced with the systemic pressures of unipolarity, the United States has acted as a power maximiser, rather than as a defensive positionalist concerned primarily with security maximisation. In other words, it has pursued an offensive unipolar strategy aimed at consolidating and enhancing its primacy in the international system. This strategic orientation is not simply a function of the ideological dispositions of the Bush administration and the perceived imperatives of the 'war on terror', but precedes the terrorist attacks of 9/11. Already in the Clinton administration, there were indications that the United States was pursuing a strategy of primacy, despite a rhetorical commitment to 'common security' and 'selective engagement', and an initial political preference for focusing on domestic economic and social problems.[27] The Clinton administration soon found itself confronted by an array of problems that required sustained American attention: proliferation, terrorism, failed states, ethno-national conflicts, Iraqi non-compliance with UN Security Council resolutions, North Korea, tension in the Taiwan straits, the ongoing cycle of violence in the Middle East and Russian recidivism. Clinton and his advisers also realised that, despite their initial predisposition towards 'effective multilateralism', the UN and other international organisations were weak and frequently ineffective, and that even close allies (like Britain and Japan) could prove uncooperative. The result was a growing emphasis on unilateral policy initiatives and a national security strategy aimed at ensuring US primacy.[28]

The Bush administration that succeeded Clinton replaced the language of common security with that of the national interest, arguing at the same time that what was good for America was also good for the world.[29] Nonetheless, talk of a Bush 'revolution' in US foreign policy is somewhat overblown, and ignores significant elements of continuity underpinning American grand strategy from the mid-1990s onwards.[30] There are, of course, significant differences in style and rhetoric between the two administrations, and some important differences on whether a strategy of primacy was best pursued unilaterally or multilaterally. Nonetheless, there is an underlying continuity in the strategic goals of US

foreign policy between the Clinton and Bush administrations which is frequently overlooked.

Military intervention and unilateralism

The US record on military intervention in the 1990s provides clear evidence of the growing capriciousness and lassitude that unipolarity afforded the American hyperpower. In the early nineties, when Europeans were preoccupied with the rapidly deteriorating security situation in the Balkans, the Americans refused to become involved – Secretary of State James Baker famously declaring that 'we don't have a dog in this fight'. Subsequent disputes over Bosnia precipitated the worst crisis in transatlantic relations since Suez.[31] By 1994, worried about the erosion of NATO's credibility and determined to reassert US leadership in Europe, the Americans armed the Croats, engineered the Dayton accords and brokered a peace agreement.[32] In 1999, President Clinton worked with his NATO allies to use airpower to coerce Serbian President Milosevic to end his persecution of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo. American troops were also used for military crisis management in Somalia and Haiti, although not in Rwanda, despite clear evidence of genocide.[33] In short, the lack of a clear pattern to US military intervention in the nineties offers evidence for Realist expectations that unipolarity left America free to decide when to intervene, and when not to.[34]

The temptations of unipolarity are also evident from the growing recourse to unilateralism in US foreign policy. This is particularly evident in the administration of George W. Bush, but was also a feature of the Clinton administration, despite the latter's rhetorical commitment to multilateralism and cooperative security.[35] In July 2001, the US delegation walked out of the London conference on strengthening the 1972 Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention; in the same month, the United States was the only country to oppose the UN Agreement to Curb the International Flow of Illicit Small Arms; in December 2001, the United States officially withdrew from the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty; the USA opposed the International Criminal Court Treaty signed in Rome in 1998, and has subsequently sought to undermine it; it also opposed the Kyoto protocols and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), both vigorously supported by America's European allies.[36]

Bush and the 'war on terror'

George W. Bush initially came to power with a foreign policy agenda designed to reduce America's foreign entanglements and focus on regions and issues deemed vital to its national interests (like relations with Mexico and Canada). The Bush administration was highly critical of what they perceived to be its predecessor's failure to use military force robustly, its penchant for peace-keeping rather than war-fighting and its ambition to solve all the world's problems. The language was that of 'selective engagement', i.e. focusing only on a limited

range of foreign policy issues where crucial American economic and strategic interests were at stake. Like the Clinton administration before it, however, that of 'Bush 43' soon found that systemic pressures presented strong incentives for a more assertive grand strategy aimed at consolidating and extending US primacy.

September 11 was not the cause of this grand strategic orientation, but it did give new impetus to an offensive unipolar strategy – and lead the Bush administration to go off in search of dragons to slay. It was also the catalyst for exposing the extent to which structural changes in the distribution of power had contributed to a fragmentation of US–European relations and a gradual process of continental drift. The 'war on terror' provided the opportunity to extend US influence into areas of growing strategic importance (such as Central Asia), and the occasion for developing new and more ambitious approaches towards milieu-shaping in the Middle East. September 11 was particularly important in creating the domestic political consensus for a strategy of primacy, using American power to reshape crucial regions in the international system in accordance with the priorities and interests of the United States.[37] It also deepened the growing US preference for unilateralism. The clearest indication of this was the decision to wage the Afghan campaign through CENTCOM and not through SHAPE, despite NATO's first ever invocation of Article V. As Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld made clear, 'the mission will define the coalition – not the other way around' – a statement clearly indicating a desire to preserve America's maximum room for manoeuvre and autonomy of action.[38] Finally, 9/11 led to a renewed emphasis on 'pre-emption' in US security strategy. The National Security Strategy of September 2002 contained an explicit commitment to use military force to pre-empt attacks before they occurred – thus affirming a more aggressive and offensively-minded approach to potential security threats that conflated 'pre-emption' with 'preventive wars'.[39]

Whilst there was broad international support and understanding for America's commitment to regime change in Afghanistan (Operation Enduring Freedom), there was considerable scepticism in Europe and elsewhere about the strategic and political rationale for a preventive war against Iraq.[40] Although Iraq was clearly in non-compliance with successive UN Security Council resolutions after a 'decade of defiance', there was no compelling evidence to suggest that its secretive WMD programme constituted an immediate threat to America or the region – much less that the Saddam regime had any connections to Al Qaeda and 9/11. Indeed, containment seemed to have been effective in curbing Iraq's regional ambitions and significantly degrading its military capabilities.[41] However, Iraq was a 'perfect storm' that united different fractions within the Bush administration around a common project – most significantly, the 'assertive nationalists' like George W. Bush, Donald Rumsfeld, Dick Cheney and Condoleezza Rice, and the neoconservative ideologues around Paul Wolfowitz, Douglas Feith and Richard Perle.[42] The assertive nationalists believed that a robust demonstration of American military might would strengthen US

influence after a decade of perceived weakness and irresolution. The neoconservatives were convinced that military power could be used to effect regime change in Iraq and wholesale milieu-shaping in the Middle East, thereby considerably improving Israel's strategic situation.[43]

The Iraq War of 2003 was a prime example of the unforeseen costs involved in succumbing to the unipolar temptations of pursuing 'fancies abroad'. Based on a series of incorrect assumptions, and executed with breathtaking incompetence, the Iraq debacle reflects both a profound misreading of Middle Eastern domestic politics, and a faulty understanding of the dynamics of international politics.[44] The neoconservatives believed that, confronted with robust military action, countries in the region would 'bandwagon' with the United States. However, as realists like John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt warned, when faced with overweening power, states tend to balance against it, not bandwagon with it.[45] The neocons' faith in a democratic 'domino effect' also blinded them to the continuing potency of nationalism as a political force in world affairs, along with the persistence of tribal and religious affiliations.

With the evident failure of its Iraq policy, the second-term Bush administration has folded the 'war on terror' into a broader 'war on tyrants'. Whilst desperately seeking to contain the Iraqi insurgency and prevent all-out civil war, the Bush administration has begun repairing relations with its closest allies, and refocusing on classic balance of power issues – in particular, managing great power relations in Asia and Europe.[46] Nonetheless, the underlying direction of American grand strategy remains constant: asserting US primacy in the international system. Despite the blooding it has received in Iraq, systemic pressures continue to propel the United States in the direction of power maximisation, rather than towards a less-ambitious 'defensive positionalist' strategy aimed at security maximisation. This is evident from US policy towards the NATO alliance in the post-Cold War era.

IV TRANSATLANTIC RELATIONS

NATO in a unipolar world

The end of the Cold War left a huge question mark over an alliance designed, in the words of its first Secretary-General Lord Ismay, to 'keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down'. In the immediate post-Cold War years, NATO was seen as serving three purposes: providing an 'insurance policy' against future recidivism in Russia; acting as the primary forum for transatlantic relations; and serving as a multilateral constraint on a reunified Germany. As the 1990s progressed, however, it became increasingly apparent that these roles were no longer appropriate to the changed security agenda. Russia's precipitate military decline made the prospect of a high intensity war a distant prospect, and the issue with Germany was not curbing nascent militarism

and hegemonic ambitions but encouraging its transformation from security consumer to security provider. NATO's utility as a forum for transatlantic dialogue also declined, primarily because of the growing divergence in US and European approaches to global order.

As the 1990s unfolded, it was evident that few in Washington or in Europe believed that NATO could justify its existence primarily in terms of Article V security guarantees once the Soviet threat had evaporated. There were suggestions that the alliance could reinvent itself either as an institutional foundation for a more cooperative form of 'common security' with the Russians and East Central Europeans (using EAPC, the 'Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council'), or as an instrument of 'security governance', involving defence sector transformation and functional military cooperation (through the mechanism of the Partnership for Peace (PFP) programme). However, neither proposal amounted to much: if 'common security' was the goal, why not use the pan-European OSCE (Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe) or involve the Russians fully in NATO decision-making? As regards 'security governance', this concept remains ill-defined and lacks real substance: PFP provided a valuable means for facilitating inter-operability, preparing candidate countries for membership, and encouraging defence sector reform in the post-communist East. But proposals for 'security governance' could not justify anything more than a slimmed down and emasculated alliance that would be a pale shadow of its former self. It was therefore no surprise that defensive realists like Kenneth Waltz suggested that 'NATO's days might not be numbered, but its days are'.[47]

By the mid-1990s, however, it became apparent that NATO could serve a useful purpose within an American grand strategy aimed at maximising US power and establishing its primacy in the international system. Rather than allowing NATO to wither on the vine, the Clinton administration pursued a twin-track policy: on the one hand, opening the alliance up to new members from East Central Europe, which served to extend US influence into Russia's former sphere of influence; and re-orienting the strategic rationale of NATO away from Article V security guarantees towards non-Article V 'crisis response operations', ensuring allied participation in US-led and directed military crisis management. This policy bore fruit in 1999, when Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic joined NATO, and the alliance waged its first full-scale offensive air campaign ('Operation Allied Force').[48] The Kosovo experience, however, convinced many in the Pentagon that waging a war 'by committee' (i.e. through SHAPE) was a bad idea, and subsequently US military policy has been more unilateral in execution. Nonetheless, NATO has served to strengthen US influence in Europe, and has provided a useful diplomatic and military adjunct to American combat operations in Afghanistan.

The decision to enlarge NATO was taken in Washington in 1993–94, in cooperation with the Defence Ministry in Bonn.[49] It proved controversial, both amongst those in Congress opposed to taking on additional security commitments, and amongst those (particularly in the State Department) who believed it

would unnecessarily sour relations with a democratising Russia.[50] Nonetheless, enlargement offered the Clinton administration both domestic political gains and new allies in the post-communist East. Although presented in the language of 'cooperative security', its real purpose was to fill the perceived 'security vacuum' in Central and Eastern Europe. Indeed, the candidate members were clear that they valued alliance membership primarily for the security guarantees it offered. In Moscow, NATO enlargement was seen as an unfriendly act presaging a new form of containment and exclusion. However, despite repeated threats to make counter-deployments of nuclear weapons in Kaliningrad and talk of activating their strategic partnership with China, Russian policy-makers recognised they could do little to prevent enlargement. They therefore concentrated on winning as many concessions as possible from NATO – in particular, some recognition of their great power status and a means to influence alliance decision-making. The result was the 1997 Founding Act and Permanent Joint Council, which was replaced by the NATO–Russian Council (NRC) in December 2002. Neither of these, however, gave Russia any real ability to shape alliance decisions (outside of carefully delineated policy areas such as counter-terrorism and peace-keeping), giving the lie to claims that enlargement offered a new form of 'cooperative security' rather than a shift in the balance of power.

NATO's role in military crisis management increasingly became the new strategic rationale for the alliance. NATO fired its first shots in anger in 1995 during Operation Deliberate Force, and subsequently provided the military infrastructure for peace-support operations within the framework of the Dayton accords (IFOR/SFOR). The alliance's most significant military operation, however, was the attempt to coerce the Serbian leadership into ending their persecution of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo in 1999. 'Operation Allied Force', as the air campaign was called, was significant in a number of respects. First, it was conducted without an explicit UN Security Council Mandate. Second, it demonstrated the capabilities of the American military and the weakness of their European counterparts. Third, European unease with the US conduct of the military campaign led to the ESDP (European Security and Defence Policy), which aimed to develop capabilities for autonomous military crisis management by EU member states. Finally, it led to US disillusionment with the idea of conducting military operations through a multilateral decision-making framework, and strengthened unilateralist instincts in Washington.[51]

Throughout this period, the US faced a number of dilemmas in its policy towards NATO. On the one hand, it sought to use NATO enlargement to strengthen its influence in Europe and to win new allies in the post-communist East. On the other, it wanted to reorientate NATO away from Article V and towards out-of-area military crisis management. However, the new members from the East were primarily interested in the US security guarantee manifest in Article V, and were less keen on assuming responsibilities for non-Article V crisis response operations.[52] Whilst the United States feared 'entrapment' in conflicts peripheral to its core interests, the new NATO members worried about

'abandonment' by their American protector – a contemporary version of the old transatlantic dilemma of extended deterrence.[53] At the same time, the US faced dilemmas in responding to European aspirations for a 'Europeanisation' of NATO and the strengthening of an autonomous European capacity for crisis management. Consequently, throughout the 1990s, Washington was highly ambivalent about both the ESDI and the ESDP.[54]

The terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 led to a further evolution in the role of NATO. For the first time in its history, the alliance invoked Article V. Although the Bush administration welcomed the diplomatic solidarity symbolised by this decision, it was initially wary of its implications for America's freedom to pursue its 'war on terror' on its own terms. Donald Rumsfeld's insistence that the 'mission defines the coalition' meant that America's NATO allies were initially given little say in shaping Operation Enduring Freedom. European military participation in Afghanistan only began in November 2001, and as noted above, it was conducted through CENTCOM, not SHAPE. NATO subsequently took command of the international peacekeeping force (ISAF) in Kabul in August 2003, but avoided engaging in combat operations in the south and west against remnants of the Taliban and Al Qaeda. America's European allies were initially keen to keep ISAF separate from Operation Enduring Freedom in order to minimise risks to their troops. In December 2005, however, they agreed to extend the NATO operations to the troubled south and west, but only after receiving guarantees that they would have a say in the treatment of enemy combatants. Currently, NATO also plays a limited role in retraining the Iraqi security services, although given French and German reservations, this training takes place outside Iraq itself.

Thus despite the claims of defensive realists, NATO's years do not seem to be numbered. To some degree, this reflects a tendency towards institutional inertia: once institutions exist and have acquired organisational assets, they tend to define new roles for themselves.[55] But this is only part of the story: more importantly, the alliance has been reconfigured to serve the interests of the American hyperpuissance.[56] NATO now provides a means of strengthening US political influence in Europe, particularly in Central and Eastern Europe. It also provides a convenient 'toolbox' from which to assemble ad hoc US-led coalitions of the willing by facilitating joint training and multinational exercises that strengthen interoperability. NATO is engaged in a process of transformation, epitomised by the creation of a NATO Reaction Force (NRF) designed to give the alliance 'teeth' to conduct expeditionary warfare alongside the US military.[57] Its membership and functions have changed considerably with the transition from bipolarity to multipolarity, and it no longer plays as central a role in the European security architecture as it did during bipolarity. Although NATO no longer functions effectively as a forum for discussing key political and strategic issues, it remains a useful vehicle for US influence in Europe and a military and diplomatic toolbox for coalitions of the willing. It thus continues to serve the broader objectives of US grand strategy. Consequently, as the deductive logic of

offensive realism would suggest, neither NATO's days nor its years are numbered, even though its composition and purpose have changed, and its overall importance to European security has declined.

Transatlantic relations: between unipolarity and multipolarity

The transformation of NATO, from a central pillar of Europe's security architecture concerned with collective territorial defence to an instrument of coalitional coercive diplomacy and military crisis management, reflects broader developments in transatlantic relations in the 1990s. The primary effect of the end of bipolarity has been to remove the central plank of post-war transatlantic relations – institutionalised security cooperation in the face of common threat. The result has been to 'de-link' security, trade and political relations, generating continental drift and a consequent fracturing of US–European relations.[58] America's relations with European states are no longer mediated through the multilateral forum of NATO, but increasingly managed on a 'hub and spokes' basis. The end of the East–West conflict has thus weakened multilateral dialogue and consultation, and strengthened the 'multiple bilateralism' that has always been an element of transatlantic relations. The result is a much more complex and differentiated pattern of cooperation and rivalry between the United States and individual European states.

During the Cold War, the allies tended to minimise their political differences and economic rivalries in the face of a common enemy. Now, however, the structural incentives to accentuate the positive and emphasise the 'ties that bind' have gone. With no common security threat, the United States is no longer Europe's security provider, and consequently, its ability to act as Europe's 'pacifier' has greatly diminished. The United States itself has global interests and new geostrategic priorities in the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific rim, and devotes less time and energy to managing transatlantic relations than during the Cold War.[59] The Europeans have regional preoccupations and are focused on 'milieu-shaping' in their near abroad – often in ways that do not accord with US interests or with its chosen instruments of statecraft. This is evident from differences over the arms embargo on China; policy towards Turkey and the Middle East; and from their divergent responses to Iran's uranium-enrichment programme.[60]

The economies of the United States and EU member states are highly interdependent, but this interdependence has not led to harmonious political relations – quite the contrary. Transatlantic relations have been characterised by growing conflict and rivalry, with recurrent disputes over a range of trade issues: steel, agriculture, beef, bananas, genetically modified crops, services, control of the Internet, trade with third parties and aeronautics. Economic rivalry has been sharpened by EMU, which overnight created a major financial competitor to the dollar.[61] Washington has also clashed with its European partners over issues as

diverse as climate change; the 'echelon' electronic surveillance and espionage system; the International Criminal Court; the role of the United Nations; and the death penalty. These economic and political disputes have been accompanied by a growing cultural and normative divide. Rightly or wrongly, many European citizens now look with disdain upon the American social and economic model, and contrast its inequalities and perceived injustices to their own welfare societies and regulated labour markets.[62]

The catalyst for exposing how frayed the web of transatlantic relations had become in the post-bipolar world was the Iraq War. It revealed the extent to which the 'West' had disintegrated as a result of continental drift, and the emerging pattern of multiple bilateralism that was replacing it.[63] NATO had once been the institutional buckle of the transatlantic alliance, and a forum for multilateral dialogue and consultation. But Chancellor Gerhard Schröder's comments at the 2005 Wehrkunde in Munich indicated that it no longer served this purpose effectively, and that a new body was required. Some have suggested that NATO's former role as a forum for transatlantic decision-making can be assumed by the institutionalised consultations between the United States and the EU. However, the EU lacks the authority and the competence to speak on behalf of its member states on much more than trade and economic issues. More importantly, there is no indication that any of the EU's major powers are willing to let their relations with the most powerful state in the international system be subsumed within a 'common' foreign and security policy decided on the basis of the lowest common denominator.

Consequently, transatlantic relations are now increasingly characterised by multiple and differentiated bilateralism on a hub and spokes basis. Washington enjoys close relations with a number of traditional 'atlanticist' countries such as the UK, Holland and Norway. It has also courted new allies in Central and Eastern Europe – most importantly Poland, America's 'new model ally'.[64] France has long been America's fiercest critic, but even so, Paris and Washington have worked closely on specific foreign policy issues (such as Lebanon, Syria and India). The most important European country from Washington's perspective, however, remains Germany – the most powerful EU member state, and the pivot of the European balance of power. The United States has consistently sought closer relations with Germany: it firmly supported unification, and also offered Bonn a privileged strategic relationship as 'partners in leadership' in May 1989.[65] This offer was not taken up at the time, but relations between Germany and the USA remained close throughout the 1990s. Schröder's electoral opportunism and his decision to join France and Russia in opposing the Iraq War led to a pronounced cooling of US–German relations. However, with the formation of a 'grand coalition' under Angela Merkel in November 2005, there is evidence that the Bush administration is once again keen to establish a privileged strategic partnership with Europe's *Zentralmacht*.

As the twenty-first century unfolds, it is clear that a new and more differentiated patchwork of security relationships are developing between Europe and

America.[66] The transformation in NATO's structure and strategic rationale has been accompanied by a change in America's military footprint in Europe. The overall number of US troops has been reduced, and base closures in Western Europe are underway. But this does not presage a military disengagement from the continent: rather, America is opening new bases in Central and Eastern Europe, where political relations are warmer. From a geostrategic perspective, these bases are also closer to potential hot-spots in the Balkans and the greater Middle East, providing the US with enhanced capabilities for power projection. This slimmed-down military presence in Europe has been accompanied by an ambiguous attitude towards European efforts to develop an autonomous capacity for military crisis management. Whilst Washington has long called for a strengthening of Europe's military capabilities, it is concerned about the development of a truly autonomous and independent European decision-making capability. This is part and parcel of deeper US ambivalence about the implications of the European integration process for America's influence in Europe and its pre-eminent role in world affairs. Once again, this reflects an underlying American concern to maintain its primacy in the international system, and prevent the emergence of regional rivals.

Conclusion

The end of bipolarity has created a new set of systemic pressures on relations between the United States and Europe. Transatlantic relations are now being refashioned by the confluence of two distinct power configurations: global unipolarity and regional multipolarity.

One unavoidable consequence of the end of bipolarity is a steady process of continental drift. West European acceptance of US leadership and the close cooperation it engendered was the product of a particular distribution of power relations: bipolarity. With the end of this specific constellation of relative power capabilities, the different foreign and security policy preferences of America and its European allies have emerged more clearly.[67] Since the early 1990s, the United States has had to learn how to deal with a multipolar Europe in a situation where its leadership is no longer automatically welcomed, and where it is – at best – primus inter pares.

Many solutions to the travails of transatlantic relations in a post-bipolar world order have been advanced. Some have blamed transatlantic discord on the inept diplomacy of the Bush administration and suggest that they can be improved with a little less Texan swagger and a little more tact.[68] This, however, ignores the manifold tensions already apparent during the Clinton presidency. Others suggest that the old transatlantic partnership could be rebuilt around a common project, and have suggested a joint effort to address the deep-seated problems of the 'greater Middle East'.[69] This ignores the diverging interests and approaches to the region that have stymied a common 'European' approach to the region, let alone the manifold differences between the United States and the European great

powers on policy towards this complex region.[70] Some have argued that the United States and Europe are so closely bound together by the 'sticky power' of economic interdependence that they will be forced to cooperate.[71] This ignores the element of competition and rivalry that ineluctably accompanies economic interdependence, and the disconcerting evidence that a high degree of economic interdependence between Europe's great powers in the years before 1914 did not prevent the outbreak of war.[72] Last but not least, some commentators have pointed to the existence of shared security threats, most importantly terrorism and proliferation, which could provide the focus for a new global partnership. [73] The problem here is that 'terrorism' is an amorphous, diffuse and multifaceted enemy which is not easy to define, let alone combat. Whilst some transatlantic cooperation against terrorism has developed, considerable differences remain, not least over issues like 'rendition' and torture; the Geneva convention and the status of 'illegal combatants'; and the role of international law and multilateral organisations.[74] Proliferation is certainly a shared concern, but as the cases of Iraq and Iran demonstrate, there are also major political and strategic differences over how best to address this problem.

In the early twenty-first century, therefore, transatlantic relations are likely to exhibit a complex mix of cooperation and conflict. As a power maximiser, the United States will continue to remain engaged in European affairs for four reasons: to retain influence in a region of continuing economic and strategic importance; to prevent the rise of a regional rival in the shape of a more integrated Europe; to cultivate new allies and partners; and to minimise balancing instincts. On the basis of a multiple and differentiated bilateralism, the USA will cooperate closely with particular allies on specific issues (including transnational crime, proliferation and terrorism), and engage in some multilateral efforts at collective 'milieu-shaping' through NATO. But the intensive multilateralised cooperation of the Cold War years has passed, and a much more differentiated pattern of diplomatic and security cooperation is developing in the context of regional balanced multipolarity. All European countries will therefore continue to face a central political dilemma: whether to bandwagon with the unipolar hyperpower, or to constrain its influence on European affairs by balancing against it.

6

WESTERN EUROPE

The limits of integration

> There are those who cry: 'But what about Europe, a supranational Europe! It only needs putting together: the French with the Germans, the Italians with the English, and so on.' Well, you know, it's convenient and sometimes very tempting to chase after these chimera and myths, but realities deal with one another on their own terms.
>
> Chancellor Helmut Schmidt (1984)[1]

This chapter examines the geopolitics of Western Europe. It comprises two sections. The first considers the structural pressures shaping and shoving the grand strategies of Europe's two oldest and longest-established great powers: Britain and France. It analyses their position in the structural distribution of power in Europe, concentrating on their very distinctive responses to the challenge of multipolarity. Part II examines the nature, impact and significance of the European integration process, primarily as it affects security cooperation and competition in the continent. It addresses a series of questions: does the EU provide firm and reliable foundations for a durable peace order in Europe, as liberal-idealists suggest? Is it a 'new model power', the archetype of a benign, beneficent and pacific strategic actor – a 'civilian' or 'normative' power? What is the significance of the EU's Security and Defence Policy (the ESDP); does it constitute a form of balancing against US power, and is it an effective instrument for addressing the security challenges facing the citizens of EU member states in the twenty-first century?

The argument presented here is that the European Union provides none of these things. The European integration process was a product of a specific constellation of power relations – namely, bipolarity. The emergence of balanced multipolarity will therefore profoundly change its scope and dynamics. The old 'EEC model' of European integration, characterised by deep integration among a homogeneous group of states coterminous with the 'Carolingian empire' is dead and gone: the EU of the twenty-first century will be much looser and more diverse, characterised by pragmatic and ad hoc patterns of 'differentiated

integration'. The ESDP is not about European 'defence', and the European Rapid Reaction Corps (ERRC) is not the nucleus of a European army: rather, it is a means of limited military crisis management and potentially, of coalitional coercive diplomacy, and will be dependent for its effective implementation on the great powers – especially France and the UK.

I WESTERN EUROPE'S GREAT POWERS

The geopolitics of Western Europe

Western Europe is home to two of Europe's oldest great powers, France and the United Kingdom. Both are long-standing nation-states with a strong sense of their own distinctive identity and role in the arena of international politics. For the last four centuries, France and Britain have played a crucial role in Europe's balance of power. Until the rise of Russia as a continental great power in the eighteenth century, Western Europe itself constituted the geopolitical 'cockpit of Europe', whose fate was central to the wider European balance of power.[2] Over the centuries, the relative power capabilities of France and the United Kingdom have waxed and waned considerably. France twice made a bid for regional hegemony, first under *Le Roi Soleil* Louis XIV, and later under the inspired leadership of Napoleon Bonaparte. On both occasions, Britain was at the forefront of counter-balancing coalitions. In the nineteenth century, the UK enjoyed such a combination of economic and military power (in the shape of the Royal Navy), that it has been described as the first 'unipolar' power of the modern world.[3] However, because of the stopping power of water, this 'strange island anchored off the Continent' was never able to translate its relative power capabilities into regional hegemony.[4] For much of the history of modern states' system, Britain and France have engaged in intense security competition – although as 'rivals more than enemies'.[5] With the rise of Germany, however, they forged an Entente Cordiale in 1904, and subsequently fought side by side in two World Wars.

Today, France and the UK enjoy relatively similar power capabilities across a broad range of dimensions: GDP, population, geographical size, military forces and political competence. Both are declared nuclear weapons states and permanent members of the UN Security Council, and both have residual post-colonial interests in the global South. They are also both members of NATO and the EU, yet their respective attitudes to these two organisations are sharply divergent. The reason for this divergence lies with their different geopolitical location in the European security system. Whereas France is a continental power, the United Kingdom is an island-nation, separated by a channel of water (the 'English Channel' or *la Manche*) that has had profound implications for the history of Europe and the British Isles.[6] Thus, despite their similarity in terms of relative power capabilities and international status, geography means that these

two *frère ennemi* (or 'adversarial partners') have diametrically opposed attitudes to the two key questions facing a multipolar Europe: relations with the American *hyperpuissance*, and approaches to the European integration process.

'Perfidious Albion': the off-shore balancer and reluctant European

From the early eighteenth century until the late nineteenth century, Britain enjoyed a steady accretion of its relative power capabilities. As an island-nation, Britain developed into a major maritime power, benefiting from global trade and eventually carving out for itself a substantial overseas empire – primarily at the expense of Spain and France.[7] In the early nineteenth century, the UK pioneered the industrial revolution, transforming itself into the 'workshop of the world' and establishing a commanding economic lead over its great power rivals. Yet the 'stopping power of water' meant that Britain was never in a position to make a bid for continental European hegemony. Instead, Britain developed a powerful blue-water navy with which to ensure its national security and safeguard its far-flung colonial and commercial interests.[8] At the same time, the UK defined a distinctive role for itself in European affairs, acting as an 'off-shore' balancer in order to prevent the emergence of an hegemonic power on the continent.

There was, Winston Churchill noted, 'a wonderful unconscious tradition of British foreign policy':

> For four hundred years the foreign policy of England has been to oppose the strongest, most aggressive, most dominating Power on the continent, and particularly to prevent the Low Countries falling into the hands of such a Power. Viewed in the light of history, these four centuries of consistent purpose amid so many changes of names and facts, of circumstances and conditions, must rank as one of the most remarkable episodes which the records of any race, nation, state, or people can show. . . .[9]

'Moreover', Churchill added, 'on all occasions England took the more difficult course.' Rather than joining the stronger party and sharing the fruits of its conquest, Britain 'took the harder course, joined with the less strong Powers, made a combination among them, and thus defeated and frustrated the Continental military tyrant whoever he was, whatever nation he led. Thus we preserved the liberties of Europe':[10]

> Observe that the policy of England takes no account of which nation it is that seeks the overlordship of Europe. The question is not whether it is Spain, or the French Monarchy, or the French Empire, or the German Empire, or the Hitler regime. It has nothing to do with rulers or nations; it is concerned solely with whoever is the strongest or the potentially dominating tyrant.[11]

By the late nineteenth century, British power was being eclipsed by that of the geographically distant United States of America, and more pertinently, by the growing industrial and military power of the German *Reich*. The twentieth century has been a century of almost unbroken decline in British fortunes, despite – or perhaps because of – its victory in the two World Wars fought to prevent German hegemony. By 1945, Britain and its empire had exhausted itself after six years of total war. Faced with the emergence of a bipolar world order, Britain passed its mantle of 'off-shore' balancer to the USA. London now sought to prevent Soviet hegemony over the European continent by engaging America in the defence of Western Europe, whilst seeking to preserve its declining influence on global affairs by cultivating a 'special relationship' with its superpower patron.

One striking feature of British grand strategy is that, as Churchill noted, it has demonstrated remarkable continuity over time. The UK has consistently sought to preserve a balance of power in Europe, whilst working with other states and through international institutions to further common interests, all the while nurturing its global maritime and economic interests. This continuity is all the more remarkable given the considerable changes that have occurred over the last 300 years in the structure of state power, the political complexion of governments, and the personal convictions of the leading Cabinet ministers and senior officials who have framed and conducted foreign policy. Party ideology and electoral manifestos have proven a poor guide to British foreign policy behaviour, and even personalities have tended to matter only at the margins.[12] This continuity in grand strategy reflects the underlying systemic pressures, emanating from the structural and spatial distribution of power in the international system, that have 'shaped and shoved' British policy since the birth of the Westphalian states' system.

During the Cold War, Britain continued with this 'wonderful unconscious tradition' of seeking to preserve a European balance of power, but – conscious of its own weakness – it did so by encouraging the United States to act as Europe's 'off-shore balancer'. At the same time, it sought to enhance its declining influence on international politics by cultivating a 'special relationship' with Washington.[13] In so doing, it continued with the grand strategy begun by Winston Churchill in 1940.[14] Throughout the Cold War, NATO was the lynchpin of British security policy, and close diplomatic ties with America provided the lodestar of its foreign policy. This transatlantic orientation was consolidated ever more firmly after the Suez debacle of 1956, which demonstrated Britain's loss of great power status and the realities of a bipolar world. The conclusion drawn by the British foreign policy elite – which, as we shall see, was diametrically opposite to that drawn by their counterparts in Paris – was that henceforth Britain should draw even closer to Washington, and serve as the latter-day Greeks to the new Rome. By aligning with the USA, it was believed, the UK would be best able to preserve its declining influence on world affairs.

Beyond the certainties of its staunchly Atlanticist security policy, there was

less clarity and coherence in British grand strategy as policy-makers sought to cope with its decline from great power status. Britain, Dean Acheson famously remarked, had lost an empire but not yet found a role for itself.[15] British foreign policy during the Cold War was often conceived as comprising three concentric circles: America, Europe and the Commonwealth. Quite how these fitted together, however, was less clear. The consequence was an unresolved tension within the role set that made up British grand strategy: between participation in a US-dominated open trading system and the residues of 'imperial preference' in the Commonwealth; between the Commonwealth and Europe; and between Europe and America. At the heart of this ambiguity was Britain's uncertain relationship with Europe – so near, and yet so far.[16] Peaceful and cooperative relations between Britain's continental neighbours – particularly France and Germany – was clearly a 'supreme interest of the British people', but cooperation that threatened to exclude Britain from the affairs of Europe was not.[17] Finding the appropriate place for Britain in Europe given its transatlantic and Commonwealth interests provided an insoluble dilemma throughout the post-war period. Even after Britain – with considerable reservations – eventually joined the EEC in 1973, it remained a reluctant European, and soon acquired a reputation for being an 'awkward partner'.[18]

The end of the Cold War exacerbated this ambivalence towards Europe, placed a question mark over the future of NATO, and threw into doubt the durability of the 'special relationship'. On the one hand, the UK was keen to shape the rules and policies governing the 'single market', and to participate in collective 'milieu-shaping' in the post-communist East through the medium of EU enlargement – which would have the added benefit, in British eyes, of watering down impulses towards deeper integration. On the other, Britain was unwilling to participate in the Franco-German project of economic and monetary union, cautious about the goal of 'political union' and suspicious of the implications of the CFSP for NATO. The UK government was also concerned that, with no Soviet threat to cement the Western alliance together, Washington would no longer see much value in the 'special relationship' – a fear heightened by US overtures to Germany to become its 'partner in leadership'.

The end of bipolarity thus had an unsettling impact on British foreign policy.[19] Although the UK government warmly welcomed the end of the East–West conflict and the prospect of a Europe 'whole and free', there were evident concerns about the implications of German unification, Russian recidivism and a potential weakening of NATO. In the early nineties, therefore, the British government voiced cautious optimism about the improved European security environment, but eschewed ambitious plans for a CSCE/OSCE-based 'collective security' arrangement or an EU-centred European 'confederation'. It also stressed the need to preserve NATO as a security guarantee against both a recidivist Russia and the 'renationalisation' of European defence policies (diplomatic short-hand for an autonomous German defence policy).[20]

As bipolarity faded and the contours of a balanced multipolar European

security system began to emerge more clearly, Britain began to adapt to its new role as one of post-Cold War Europe's great powers. As a permanent member of the UN Security Council, Britain was aware of its responsibilities for international peace and security. With France, it played a central role in peace support operations in Bosnia – an example of cooperative milieu-shaping in Europe's 'near abroad'. Disputes with Washington over policy towards Bosnia led to the severest crisis in British-US relations since Suez.[21] This rift was repaired after Dayton, and subsequently in the Kosovo War, the British government worked closely with the Clinton Administration to ensure the success of 'Operation Allied Force'. Despite recurrent tensions with Washington throughout the 1990s, however, British policy-makers continued to stress the value of the 'special relationship', a theme taken up with renewed emphasis by the Blair government. This policy was rooted in the belief that Britain's influence on international and European affairs would be enhanced by a privileged partnership with the world's most powerful state. Once again, on the crucial issue of bandwagoning with, or balancing against, the American hyperpower, structural pressures acting on this 'strange island anchored off the Continent' led it instinctively to choose the former.

Nevertheless, this transatlantic orientation was not unproblematic. As we have seen, given the temptations offered by its unipolar global power, the United States was not always a dependable and predictable ally. Consequently, the UK was aware that America could not be relied upon to tackle security problems in Europe's backyard in ways that accorded with European preferences.[22] In the context of global unipolarity and regional balanced multipolarity, therefore, it has sought to develop a dual-track approach: preserving an intimate relationship with the USA (with the explicit aim of forming a 'bridge' between Europe and America), and fostering close cooperation with its European allies – particularly France – in order to facilitate collective milieu-shaping, including an autonomous European capability for military crisis management. The result was the St Malo summit of December 1998, and the subsequent launch of the ESDP project, which we will examine below.

Despite this commitment to the ESDP, British policy towards Europe since the end of the Cold War has been ambivalent, equivocal and uncertain.[23] Britain's economic interests lie increasingly in Europe, and withdrawal from the EU would not be in the national interest. At the same time, however, the UK is uncomfortable with institutions and policies shaped primarily by the French and Germans. The result has been consistent efforts to change the EU from within. Unfortunately, Prime Minister John Major's attempts to play a role 'right at the heart of the Community' were hamstrung by the BSE dispute and the vociferous opposition of the Euro-sceptic wing of the Tory party (with its 'Little Englander' mindset).[24] The New Labour landslide of 1997 brought to office Tony Blair, the most pro-European prime minister since Edward Heath.[25] He too sought to carve out for Britain a leading role in the EU in order to reshape it more in accordance with perceived British interests, which meant an enlarged,

more outward-looking and less regulated Union, developing in close partnership with the USA. British co-sponsorship of the ESDP was an attempt to define a new policy area in which Britain, by virtue of its much-admired military proficiency, could play a major role – in contrast to EMU, which the UK had opted out of.[26]

Blair's ambitious strategy of being both an intimate of Washington and at the heart of the EU could not, however, survive the diplomatic furore that preceded the Iraq War. When push came to shove, Britain chose America over 'old Europe'. Despite attempts to mend the rifts occasioned by Iraq, tensions between London and Paris lingered on for some time afterwards. The limits of British influence in Europe were demonstrated by the British EU Presidency in the second half of 2005: although a budget was agreed at the eleventh hour, Blair was unable to deliver on his promise of reforming the EU and making it more attuned to the competitive pressures of economic globalisation. Despite the generally positive response to his key-note address to the European Parliament in July 2005, Blair recognised that little could be achieved in the face of Franco-German intransigence.[27]

The UK Presidency illustrated the central dilemma that has confronted British policy towards Europe since the early 1950s. Britain can never rival the Paris–Berlin axis as an alternative source of strategic leadership for the EU, but neither is it willing to acquiesce to a Franco-German condominium. Consequently, British policy towards the EU continues the 'wonderful unconscious tradition of British foreign policy' identified by Churchill – namely, preventing the continent from being dominated by any one state or group of states.[28] British interests would not be well served by withdrawal from the Union or from the unravelling of the integration process, given the economic benefits of a single market and the need for collective milieu-shaping. However, the UK is unwilling to leave the future direction of the EU to its self-appointed Franco–German motor. Consequently, British policy towards the EU since the end of bipolarity has emphasised enlargement, because in an enlarged Union, the British government has more chance of forming ad hoc alliances on specific EU policies and institutions. Hence its support for Turkish membership, and its cultivation of new partnerships with more reform minded member states. Systemic pressures mean that Britain is fated to remain the EU's 'awkward partner', at least in the eyes of the 'Euro-Gaullists' who want a *Europe puissance* able to balance against the USA within a multipolar global order. 'Perfidious Albion' is thus destined to clash with France on the two major questions facing a multipolar Europe: relations with the American *hyperpuissance*, and the future of the European integration process.

France: *grandeur* and neurosis

French foreign policy seems to inspire admiration and exasperation in equal measure.[29] Unlike Germany, it has not had to re-learn its old great power role,

for it has never stopped acting like a great power – even when it was not one. The French foreign policy elite is deeply imbued with a sense of France's *Grandeur,* its *mission civilistrice* and *l'exception française*. Like America, France seems convinced of its exceptional qualities and the universalist resonance of its distinctive national values and culture.[30] Consequently, French grand strategy is aimed at enhancing France's international rank and status, and preserving its independence and autonomy of action. At the same time, French policy-makers seem convinced that what is good for France is good for Europe, and that France embodies all that is best in Europe. They are thus prone to conflating 'France' and 'Europe', and assuming that a European *puissance* will be French-led and inspired.[31]

If British foreign policy since 1940 has been but footnotes to Churchill, that of France has been footnotes to General Charles De Gaulle.[32] Like Churchill, De Gaulle's strategic vision was shaped by the experience of war with Germany and the eclipse of his country's great power status – the latter epitomised by Yalta, an event which assumed profound significance in French political mythology, symbolising France's exclusion from the crucial decisions leading to the division of Europe. Both men grappled with the dilemmas of bipolarity and the relative decline in their countries' relative power capabilities. Both sought to maximise the international influence and standing of their countries in a continent dominated by the two superpowers, and to forge foreign policies for former great powers now operating in the shadow of giants. Although much has changed since their days, their respective legacies continue to shape the broad contours of the grand strategies of these two Western European powers as they respond to balanced multipolarity.

De Gaulle's legacy – like that of Churchill – is a complex one.[33] First and foremost, Gaullism stands for a strong, autonomous and independent France, willing to defend its sovereignty and stand up for French national interests. Militarily, this is manifested in the independent French nuclear deterrence, the *force de frappe*. Second, De Gaulle believed in *une certaine idée de la France*: a conviction that France embodied a distinctive set of civilisational values with universal resonance and appeal.[34] From 'time immemorial', he argued, 'it had been in her nature to accomplish "God's work", to disseminate freedom of thought, to be a champion of humanity.'[35] It was therefore incumbent upon France – serving as it did 'the universal cause of human dignity and progress' – to play a leading role upon the international stage.[36] For De Gaulle, 'the same destiny which enabled France to survive the terrible crisis of the war, offered to her afterwards, in spite of all she had lost over the past two centuries in terms of relative power and wealth, a leading international role which suited her genius, responded to her interests and matched her means'.[37] It was France's post-war destiny, De Gaulle believed, to reject the 'hegemony known as Atlantic solidarity', and to forge a 'European Europe' free of superpower hegemony, and founded upon a 'concert of European States which in developing all sorts of ties between them would increase their interdependence and solidarity'.[38] This 'European Europe'

required 'the co-operation of Paris and Bonn', but such cooperation was 'a necessary but by no means sufficient precondition for organized European co-operation'.[39] However, both Konrad Adenauer and De Gaulle agreed that 'there could be no question of submerging the identity of our two nations in some stateless construction'.[40] De Gaulle rejected the technocrats' 'delusions of integration' and the 'hopes and illusions of the supra-national school', and argued instead that European cooperation must be built 'in accordance with realities':

> Now, what are the realities of Europe? What are the pillars on which it can be built? The truth is that those pillars are the States of Europe . . . States each of which, indeed, has its own genius, history and language, its own sorrows, glories and ambitions; but States that are the only entities with the right to give orders and the power to be obeyed.[41]

This distinctive foreign policy was implicit in the strategic choices made by De Gaulle in 1940, but took clearer form following the establishment of the Fifth Republic in 1958. The seminal event in the formation of this Gaullist grand strategy was the Suez crisis of 1956, which impressed upon the French foreign policy elite the need to develop the capacity and will to act independently in pursuit of French interests. Unlike Britain, which chose to align ever more closely with Washington, France sought to distance itself from the Atlantic alliance, which De Gaulle viewed as tantamount 'to the military and political domination of Western Europe to the United States'.[42] In place of NATO, the French looked to closer European cooperation as a way of enhancing its power and independence in the world.

Under De Gaulle, therefore, the Fifth Republic developed its own independent nuclear deterrent, the *force de frappe*, and withdrew from NATO's integrated military command structure. *Le Général* also vetoed British attempts to join the EEC, believing that the UK would serve as a 'fifth column' for American influence and undermine French efforts to create a 'European Europe'. Within Europe, France pursued a policy of détente with the communist East; on the international stage, it sought to profile itself as an ally of the Third World and the Arab Middle East – thereby offering an implicit challenge to US foreign policy. The lynchpin of Gaullist foreign policy was a close relationship with Germany, the country inevitably destined to be 'the keystone of any European edifice', but now a 'wounded giant'.[43] Whilst seeking to prevent West Germany from acquiring nuclear weapons and urging 'patience' in terms of achieving its re-unification, De Gaulle sought to establish friendly and cooperative relations with Bonn. Germany was to support French efforts to 'resume its rightful place in the world' in exchange for French support to help Germany recover its dignity.[44]

De Gaulle's vision of an independent France shaping a 'European Europe' had wide resonance in post-war France, and established the main direction of

subsequent French grand strategy throughout the Cold War. Yet the strategy itself was not without its tensions, with which all subsequent French Presidents, from Pompidou to Chirac, have had to grapple.[45] Gaullist foreign policy seeks both great power status and independence of action, but there is a tension between the two.[46] To acquire great power status involves shouldering the responsibilities and burdens entailed in managing international issues and a willingness to engage in milieu-shaping. But given France's constrained power capabilities, this usually involves working with other great powers, at the cost of some autonomy and independence of action. The dilemmas of Gaullist foreign policy are most apparent in its *Europapolitik*, where it has been confronted by the need to make a trade-off between independence within a *Europe des Patries*, and pooling some sovereignty in order to acquire a leadership role within a 'European Europe'.

With the end of Cold War bipolarity, these tensions became more acute.[47] In contrast to the caution and reserve with which British foreign policy-makers received the end of the Cold War, French perspectives were characterised by a combination of great optimism and ambitious hopes on the one hand, and dark fears on the other. The hopes were that, at long last, 'Europe' could free itself from superpower domination, reversing the sorry legacy of 'Yalta', and assert itself as an autonomous international actor, with France as the guiding light and driving force of this European *puissance*. Throughout the 1990s, therefore, Paris pursued a grand strategy aimed at weakening US influence in Europe and establishing the EU as an autonomous actor in a multilateral world, in order to amplify French power, influence and *grandeur*.[48] At the same time, many in France harboured deep concerns about the shift in relative power capabilities between France and newly reunited Germany, a development that could potentially unbalance the Franco-German axis forged in the Cold War. Not only had Germany grown in terms of its power capabilities, but as the *Zentralmacht* in a Europe 'whole and free', it was also well placed to cultivate new strategic partnerships and economic interests in the post-communist East. The fear was, therefore, that Germany would be less willing to play second fiddle to Paris, and would increasingly assert its own national interests.

Thus as France sought to define a new role for itself as a great power in a multipolar Europe, it faced a number of serious challenges. First and foremost, the enhanced power of Germany – no longer a semi-sovereign 'wounded giant' recovering from its collective *Götterdämmerung*, but increasingly a 'normal' great power willing and able to assert its national interests. Although there are some suggestions that President Mitterrand flirted with the idea of using Britain and Russia to balance German power, in the end French policy focused on embedding Germany in deeper webs of economic, political and military cooperation. German unification has clearly enhanced Germany's power vis-à-vis France, and diminished the importance of the Franco-German relationship in German foreign policy. However, it has not led to a structure of unbalanced multipolarity, and has therefore not precipitated a breakdown in relations

between Paris and Berlin. Consequently, whilst the political dynamics of the Franco-German partnership have undoubtedly changed with the shift from bipolarity to balanced multipolarity, and a number of contentious issues have arisen, both parties recognise that cooperation between them continues to serve their mutual interests, not least in shaping the wider European milieu.

A second, related issue, is the trade-off to be struck between great power status, leadership and integration on the one hand, and sovereignty and independence on the other. This dilemma has affected France's attitude to both the EU and NATO. As regards the European Union, France has grudgingly accepted some loss of autonomy in order to enhance its ability to exercise leadership – in tandem with Germany – over a 'European Europe'.[49] Nonetheless, the dilemma of maximising its independence and autonomy versus shaping an EU which will amplify French influence remains unresolved, creating an ambiguity at the heart of French policy towards Europe. The rejection of the proposed European Constitution by the French and Dutch electorates has generated a profound crisis in the European integration process, exacerbating the dilemmas facing Paris as it struggles to come to terms with the complexities of an enlarged Union in which its influence has been diluted.[50]

French policy towards NATO is also highly ambivalent. In general, France has sought to weaken the alliance's role in Europe's security architecture, given its function as a conduit for American influence. Nonetheless, the experience of the 1991 Gulf War illustrated the utility of NATO as an instrument for collective military crisis management – a lesson subsequently reinforced by developments in former Yugoslavia. Given the growing importance of coalitional coercive diplomacy and multilateral military operations in the post-Cold War world, French policy-makers recognised that their absence from NATO's integrated command structures weakened their ability to participate effectively in military crisis management alongside both the Americans and their European partners, thereby weakening their claims to great power status.[51] Throughout the 1990s, therefore, France has inched closer to NATO whilst working for its 'Europeanisation'.[52]

The final dilemma for French policy-makers as they confront the challenges of multipolarity is how best to respond to the demands of a globalising world economy. French aspirations to have a leading role in a 'European Europe' depend on their ability to generate enhanced power capabilities to give substance to their ambitious foreign policy goals. But with over 10 per cent unemployment, slow growth, a discontented underclass in the *banlieues*, a bloated public sector and an expensive welfare system, French politicians are acutely aware that they face tough decisions. During President Chirac's presidency, per capita wealth in France has been overtaken by both Britain and Ireland.[53] Prime Minister De Villepin has declared that globalisation 'cannot be our destiny', but other politicians – like his main rival, Nicolas Sarkozy – have recognised the need to restore economic vitality by tax cuts, privatisation and deregulation of the labour market.[54] The mass protests in the spring of 2006 that greeted De

Villepin's modest attempt to tackle the problem of youth unemployment by more flexible employment laws demonstrates the political problems facing structural economic reform in France. In the post-Cold War world, economic competition is a crucial dimension of the broader competition for power and influence in international politics.[55] Revitalising its sclerotic economy will thus constitute a major challenge for the French political class as they strive to assert French interests in a multipolar Europe.

Britain, France and the multipolar challenge

For both Britain and France, adjusting to the new realities of post-Cold War Europe has not been unproblematic. Both have had to define new roles for themselves in a multipolar Europe, and both have had to adjust to new systemic pressures and a changed incentive structure. Despite their broadly comparable relative power capabilities, however, they have responded differently to the return of multipolarity. This can be explained by their differing geopolitical location in the European security system. As an island-nation, the UK has long sought to prevent the emergence of a hegemonic power on the continent or of a united Europe from which it is excluded. It is therefore more comfortable with a looser, wider Europe, within which it can form ad hoc coalitions on specific issues. The French 'Hexagon', on the other hand, as a continental power par excellence, has long identified itself with 'Europe', and sought to construct *une Europe puissance à la Française*.[56]

Nonetheless, despite these geopolitically derived differences in grand strategy, the fact that they are broadly comparable in relative power capabilities means that they have faced similar structural pressures in balanced multipolarity. This has generated some marked similarities in their foreign and defence policies. First, the end of the Cold War and the advent of a balanced multipolar Europe has led to a similar process of defence restructuring. Both the UK and France have re-oriented their armed forces away from collective or national territorial defence towards expeditionary warfare and power projection.[57] Power projection has always been an element of British and French military thinking given their residual overseas interests, but it has now moved centre-stage. The first clear indication of this was France's decision in February 1996 to abandon conscription in favour of a professional military, explicitly modelled on the British Army;[58] the second was President Chirac's plans for a major increase in defence expenditure in October 2002.[59] This is an important consequence of balanced multipolarity and a lessening of great power security competition. European armies are now less focused on preparing to fight high-intensity wars of national survival, and are being restructured for military crisis management, peace-support operations and humanitarian operations. This represents a shift away from what Thomas Schelling termed 'brute force' towards coercion and the more discriminate use of force.[60] The St Malo summit and the ESDP needs to be seen in this light: it is not aimed at creating a 'European army' designed

for collective territorial defence, but to forge an instrument for coalitional coercive diplomacy and military crisis management.

Second, both are adjusting to the opportunities and demands of more complex patterns of diplomatic and strategic interaction in balanced multipolarity. Both are faced with a more fluid and dynamic international system which offers new opportunities for diplomatic influence and power maximisation. Paris has responded by developing new patterns of trilateral diplomacy; London has responded by cultivating new allies in Central and Eastern Europe, and seeking to forge new ad hoc coalitions within the EU.

The peeling back of superpower 'overlay' has left greater potential for destabilising developments around Europe's periphery and in its 'new neighbourhood'. As Western Europe's two great powers, London and Paris have recognised the need to assume responsibility for taking a leading role in fashioning new forms of conflict prevention, crisis management and regional governance. France and Britain have much in common in this regard, given their permanent membership of the UN Security Council, their conventional military capabilities and their possession of nuclear weapons. They have worked closely together in the Balkans and in launching the ESDP. Together with Germany, they have also assumed responsibility for trying to negotiate an end to Iran's uranium-enrichment programme, acting on behalf of the EU (as the 'EU3'). Yet at the same time, cooperation between them has been accompanied by profound disagreements on relations with Washington and the future of the EU.[61] They are thus rivals as much as they are partners, and with the transition from bipolarity to multipolarity, they have become more concerned with relative gains. This is reflected in the controversies surrounding the EU budget, the British rebate and the CAP. Although realist theory would not expect the emergence of intense security competition in balanced multipolarity, it would lead one to expect greater rivalry and a greater sensitivity to relative, rather than absolute, gains – albeit within the context of a wider European 'Concert' designed to address shared interests in collective milieu-shaping.

Franco-British relations in balanced multipolarity are therefore characterised by a complex mix of cooperation and conflict. No *entente cordiale* against Berlin has emerged because Germany is not perceived as a hegemonic threat, and because London and Paris have different ways of dealing with the enhanced power of a united Germany. However, Germany remains the crucial variable in the European balance of power. Once it overcomes the costs of reunification, and if it is able to tackle its structural economic problems and capitalise on its geographical proximity to new markets in the post-communist East, Germany may once again emerge as the dominant power in Europe. This would fatally weaken the Franco-German axis, and serve as the catalyst for significant shifts in the balance of power. In this context, France and Britain would be bound to draw closer together – as *frère ennemi*, fated to cooperate, despite their long-standing rivalries.

II THE EUROPEAN UNION

A 'new model actor'?

In the liberal-idealist *Weltanschauung*, the European Union occupies a hallowed position. Widely regarded as a *deus ex machina* that has saved Europe from itself, the EU is seen as the foundation of a post-Cold War – not to say 'post-national', cosmopolitan and even 'post-modern' – European order.[62] The European integration process, it is claimed, has involved a process of institutionalised multilateral cooperation that has resulted in the creation of a pluralistic security community and the transcendence of power politics, security competition and the balance of power. Variously described as a 'civilian' or 'normative' power, the EU is regarded as a novel and uniquely benign entity in international politics which serves as the harbinger of a Kantian *foedus pacificum*.[63] The EU is credited with having made possible peaceful, institutionalised cooperation between its member states – through a novel peace project manifested in the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), structural funds, European Commission directives and QMV (qualified majority voting). It is also regarded as a source of 'soft governance', projecting cooperation and peace in its 'new neighbourhood' and beyond.[64] For liberal-idealists, the EU shapes its external environment, not by what it does, but by virtue of what it is: a 'normative power' embodying what are regarded as the distinctly 'European' virtues of harmony, peaceful cooperation, patient negotiation and compromise.[65]

Some regard the EU as an emergent 'great power', despite its problematic 'actorness'.[66] Most liberal-idealists, however, claim that the apparent weakness of the Union as an international actor – its paucity of coercive instruments and its consequent reliance on declaratory politics and 'soft power' – in fact constitute the very source of its strength.[67] Such arguments fit comfortably with a view prevalent in European policy-making circles that while Europeans may not come 'from Venus', nonetheless there is a distinctive 'European' approach to international politics that favours diplomacy, persuasion, negotiation and compromise. This is contrasted favourably to the rather more martial (and 'Martian') American approach which is more disposed to using military coercion and hard power.[68] Liberal-idealists attach great importance to globalisation, deepening interdependence and the spread of human rights (primarily defined in Western, if not Eurocentric, terms), and consequently, they believe, the future belongs to Europe. The European Union is thus seen not merely as a means of addressing specifically European concerns, but as a model worthy of emulation across the globe – a process that will conclude in the 'civilianisation' of international relations, cooperative global governance and the emergence of a cosmopolitan democratic polity.

The reality, however, is sadly more prosaic: the EU is far from being a 'normative' or 'civilian' power, but a long way from being a 'great power'. Liberal-idealists tend to overlook the fact that the European integration process

was a European solution to specifically European problems, which developed under the very unique circumstances of regional bipolarity, and which was largely driven by its most powerful member states. Liberal-idealists underestimate these structural factors because they favour actor-based ontologies and interpretivist epistemologies. These ontological and epistemological preferences are problematic on three grounds: first, they are reductionist in that they seek to 'explain international outcomes through elements and combinations of elements located at national or subnational levels'.[69] Second, they suffer from liberal-idealism's perennial weakness, namely 'the almost total neglect of power'.[70] As Hedley Bull noted, the civilian power concept was a contradiction in terms because 'the power of influence exerted by the European Community and other such civilian actors was conditional upon a strategic environment provided by the military power of states, which they did not control'.[71] Third, they are explicitly normative, in that they regard civilian and normative power as a 'good thing'. The problem here is that when the object of study is seen as embodying the core values one believes in, it is difficult to achieve any critical distance. As a leading peace researcher has argued, whenever 'empirical and normative work are closely tied together as critical theorists like to do, there is always the danger that one's idea of normative goodness (or political interests) will weigh too heavily in one's thinking about what is empirically true or theoretically adequate'.[72]

Structural realism and the European integration process

In the effort to create a foundational 'myth' to legitimise what is seen as a putative European polity, the European integration process has been portrayed as an historic 'peace project' designed to overcome the animosities of war and lay the foundations of a durable peace order. The pertinent question, however, is why the post-war integration process was successful, whilst cognate projects inspired by similar liberal-idealist notions (notably the League of Nations and the Locarno Treaties) failed after the First World War. Realists attribute this to the structure of power, a factor frequently overlooked in liberal-idealist accounts of the European integration process. The crucial permissive condition that facilitated the success of the post-1945 integration process was bipolarity: cooperation in Western Europe took place under the security umbrella provided by the USA and institutionalised in NATO. In this context, concerns about relative gains were relaxed and security competition waned, facilitating cooperation between former enemies. The achievement of limited, albeit novel, forms of economic and political cooperation in the context of bipolarity, however, does not mean that the EEC constituted a new form of power as Duchêne claimed, or that the nature of international politics had fundamentally changed. The EEC was not a 'new model actor' wielding an innovative form of 'civilian' power, but rather an institutional vehicle for cooperation on a limited range of economic issues driven by its largest powers, a development facilitated by the bipolar structure of power.

The EU undoubtedly constitutes a novel form of institutionalised multilateral cooperation, but it is one which has developed under very specific and unique circumstances – the protective umbrella provided by Western Europe's American pacifier.[73] The EU is no 'new Leviathan' imposing order on recalcitrant great powers and transcending the structural condition of anarchy in European international politics: it is an instrument that its member states use to address common interests in specific and clearly delineated policy areas. Its direct security role is marginal, and its strategic importance in global politics minimal. The EU contains limited elements of supranationalism, but in policy areas where vital national interests are at stake, decisions are reached on the basis of intergovernmentalism, i.e. by negotiation and agreement between national governments.[74] The key decision-making body remains the European Council, which provides the capstone of the EU edifice, and which is firmly intergovernmental. Since the end of bipolarity, which has made states more sensitive to relative gains, intergovernmentalism has been strengthened, as realist theory would predict. Policy decisions are the result of tough negotiations in the Council between national governments, not the product of a supranational 'general will' articulated by the Commission and diffused through EU directives and multilevel governance.[75] The evidence also suggests that when member states – particularly the great powers – perceive their vital national interests to be at stake, they are willing and able to break EU rules and regulations – even if they themselves took a hand in framing them.[76]

Rather than being the expression of a European 'general will' serving the common good, the EU has long been a pragmatic instrument for addressing specific economic and political concerns. Moreover, it is one driven by the interests of its most powerful member states – particularly France and Germany. The Franco-German axis has provided the motor for the integration process, and embodies an implicit contract between the two countries to cooperate in shaping their regional neighbourhood, oiled by German money and French savoire-faire. The limited role of the EEC as an international actor in the context of bipolarity was evident from European Political Co-operation (EPC). This emerged in 1970 alongside the European Communities and, until the Single European Act came into force in 1987, it remained outside the community's legal framework.[77] The EPC was strictly intergovernmental, managed by diplomats and generated much declaratory policy but little of substance. It emerged as a response to the perceived need for common approaches to milieu-shaping, and provided a forum for limited policy coordination towards the Middle East, the CSCE and the UN. The process was driven by its largest participating states (as realists would expect), and few would dispute that its impact on international politics was, at best, marginal.[78] The replacement of EPC by the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) following the Maastricht Treaty did not significantly change the EU's fundamental weaknesses as an international actor.

One area where the EEC/EU has had some international weight is trade and economic policy. Here, the EU is far from being a 'normative power'. It fights

hard to defend and further the interests of its member states, and has proven a tough negotiator in trade negotiations. It has defended the CAP and other restraints on trade, despite the impact this has had on the developing world.[79] In its near abroad, the EU throughout the 1990s set tough conditions for those seeking membership and for supplicant countries. In so doing, the EU functioned as an instrument for collective milieu-shaping, thereby furthering the long-term strategic and economic interests of its member states. The result has been an 'imposed' rather than a 'negotiated order',[80] utilising material power in the shape of economic inducements and 'conditionality clauses' to impose its vision of political and economic order on the post-communist East.[81] This clearly shows that in its dealings in its 'near abroad', the EU is far from being a 'normative power' whose influence derives from 'what it is', rather than 'what it does'.[82] On the contrary, the EU's influence arises from its economic clout, the fear of exclusion from its markets and the promise of future membership – all very tangible sources of hard power.

The EU and collective milieu-shaping

The EU's importance as a collective instrument of external 'milieu-shaping' was greatly enhanced by the end of bipolarity. The weakening of Soviet power in Eastern Europe and the subsequent collapse of communist regimes throughout the region confronted EU member states – especially Germany – with the unsettling prospect of political instability and economic crisis on their borders. The new democracies in the post-communist East all sought to 'return to Europe' by joining the EU, a prospect not immediately welcome to many member states. In this context, the EU acquired a significant new role: projecting stability into Central and Eastern Europe. As we have seen, all states have an interest in the stability of their external milieu. The problem is how the necessary governance tasks can be fulfilled in a self-help system. Few EU member states, and even fewer in East Central Europe, were happy to see Germany take on a special responsibility for the sole management of *Mitteleuropa* – the historical precedents were too unsettling. At the same time, Germany itself was stretched dealing with unification, and was therefore keen to share the burden of supporting the 'triple transformation' in the East. Consequently, a consensus quickly emerged that the EU should act as a collective vehicle for 'milieu-shaping' in the East, focusing on the provision of what was termed 'soft governance'. The 'hard' security guarantees sought by the post-communist democracies of East Central Europe were to be provided by NATO and the USA. The EU was to shape the economic, social and political aspects of transformation through utilising a variety of instruments: political partnership or ostracism; economic carrots and sticks; the promise of membership or the threat of exclusion.

As a vehicle for collective milieu-shaping, the EU faced its severest test in the Balkans. 'Catastrophes', Victor Hugo remarked, 'have a sombre way of sorting things out'.[83] Catastrophes often serve to lay bare the stark realities of

power relations which can otherwise remain obscure during more placid times, and the tragic wars of Yugoslav succession were no exception. 'This is the hour of Europe', Jacque Poos announced at the onset of the crisis.[84] But hubris led to tragedy, as 'civilian power' Europe proved singularly ill-equipped to exert any significant impact on the warring parties. The violent break-up of Yugoslavia was important for the post-Cold War European security system in four respects: first, it presented EU member states with difficult questions about managing the fall-out from the conflict. Who would take the lead and bear the costs of tackling the common problems of spill-over and regional instability? After the EU's failure, Britain and France took up the burden, although with little real enthusiasm. Second, it demonstrated the capriciousness and unreliability of the US hyperpower. America, basking in its 'unipolar moment', chose not to involve itself in Balkan affairs for most of the early nineties – Secretary of State James Baker famously remarking that 'we don't have a dog in this fight'.[85] When it did engage, at Dayton and in Kosovo, it did so in ways that unsettled many Europeans. Third, the crisis underlined the limitations of soft power and the need for the EU to have credible military forces to back up its diplomacy if it wished to engage in effective coalitional crisis management.[86] Fourth, it exposed the illusory character of many of the claims made for the EU as an international actor. The CFSP was effectively sidelined as Europe's great powers worked through the Contact Group, in a classic example of 'Concert diplomacy'.[87] Finally, the Balkans provided the setting where a number of European states re-learnt their old great power roles.[88] The prime example is Germany, which shed its *Zivilmacht* reservations about an 'out-of-area' role for the Bundeswehr and assumed the responsibilities that great power status entailed. By the end of the decade, the German government was actively articulating and pursuing its national interests, and had taken part in offensive military operations against a sovereign state without an explicit UN Security Council mandate.[89]

Events in the Balkans also played a catalytic role in the launch of the ESDP, a development with potentially far-reaching implications for the EU's role as an instrument of collective milieu-shaping. The St Malo summit created the political preconditions for the ESDP, which was formally launched at the EU Cologne Summit in June 1999. In December 1999, the Helsinki European Council set the 'Headline Goal' of establishing a 60,000-strong European Rapid Reaction Corps (ERRC), capable of being deployed within 60 days and sustainable in theatre for a year. Its purpose was to give EU member states an 'autonomous capacity to take decisions where NATO as a whole is not engaged', in order to conduct 'EU-led military operations'. These decisions were followed by long and tortuous negotiations with NATO to allow the EU to draw on alliance assets (using the so-called 'Berlin plus' arrangements) where necessary. In 2000, the EU committed itself to developing a civilian crisis management capability, and in 2001 at the Gothenburg Summit, a third pillar – crisis prevention – was added to the CFSP. In February 2004, the EU3 (Britain, France and Germany) proposed the creation of EU 'battlegroups', designed to give the

ESDP smaller, self-contained rapid deployment forces.[90] This decision was adopted by the EU in June 2004 which also agreed the Headline Goal 2010, and at a subsequent conference in November 2004, it was agreed that 13 battle-groups would be created. Since then, the EU has deployed peace support operations within the framework of the ESDP in the Balkans, Caucasus, Africa and the Middle East.[91] It has also agreed a document grandly titled A Secure Europe in a Better World. Although described as the 'European Security Strategy', it is more an outline of the EU's view of world politics and a survey of major security issues, and offers little in the way of practical strategic advice beyond platitudes ('effective multilateralism') and noble aspirations.[92]

Clearly, a number of domestic and international factors contributed to the emergence of the ESDP. In terms of the structural distribution of power, however, two developments were crucial to the ESDP initiative: the preponderance of US power globally ('unipolarity'), which meant that the USA could afford to pay less attention to the concerns of its European allies and devote less time to alliance management, leading to European perceptions that it was a capricious and unreliable partner;[93] and balanced multipolarity in Europe, which created the permissive conditions for regional cooperation to address shared concerns. The ESDP is thus the product of the conflux of two systemic pressures: global unipolarity and regional multipolarity.[94]

The ESDP can therefore be seen as the response of EU member states to the uncertainties of US security policy in the context of global unipolarity. As realism would predict, the process has been driven by the 'big three', and remains firmly intergovernmental. The ESDP is not about collective European territorial defence, and the ERRC is not a 'European army'. The ESDP is a collective instrument for coalitional coercive diplomacy and military crisis management by EU member states, as defined by the Petersberg Tasks and the European Security Strategy.[95] It establishes an institutional and procedural framework for limited security cooperation in order to collectively shape the Union's external milieu, using limited military coercion to back up its diplomacy where necessary.[96]

As an international actor, the EU also serves as the institutional repository of the second-order normative and ethical concerns of its member states, including opposition to the death penalty, propagating humanitarian values, and 'saving strangers' from genocide or gross violations of human rights.[97] As we have seen, all states have a range of normative political concerns that they pursue if doing so does not adversely affect their vital national interests. On the basis of her analysis of the foreign policy role conceptions of the 'big three' in the 1990s, Lisbeth Aggestam has argued that towards the end of the decade, Britain, France and Germany converged around a shared role conception of the EU as an 'ethical power'.[98] All three regarded the EU as a 'force for good' in the world, committed to furthering shared European values of democracy, human rights, multilateralism and the peaceful settlement of disputes. These values remain loosely defined so that they do not conflict with the more specific foreign and

security policy objectives of the major powers, who continue to pursue their first-order concerns outside the EU/ESDP institutional context (either independently, with key allies, or through NATO). In this limited sense therefore, the EU is perceived by its member states to be an 'ethical power', even if it is no longer a 'civilian power' nor a post-modern 'normative power'.[99] The ESDP is thus a means to give EU member states the ability to collectively shape their external milieu and pursue second-order normative concerns. It represents the response of EU member states to the failures of 'civilian power' Europe in the Balkans, and is a development made possible by the twin structural dynamics of a unipolar world and a multipolar Europe.

The future of European security and defence policy

Although structural realism does not advance strong claims to predictive ability, an analysis of the global and regional structural distribution of power does suggest some broad conclusions about the future of European security and defence cooperation. First and foremost, structural realism would suggest that Europe's great powers will continue to jealously guard their sovereign rights to pursue their own foreign and security policy priorities. Consequently, the CFSP/ESDP is destined to remain firmly intergovernmental. Cooperation in the second pillar will remain limited to a set of 'second-order' concerns agreed on the basis of the lowest common denominator.[100] Multipolarity will also set limits to the scope and ambition of EU foreign and security policy. Although security competition is muted in Europe at present, realists would expect it to grow as power relationships change, as they inevitably will. This would increase concerns with relative gains, and weaken the commitment to cooperative milieu-shaping.

Second, if the EU is to have an international role beyond milieu-shaping in its 'new neighbourhood'[101] and acting as the institutional repository of the shared second-order ethical concerns of its member states, the responsibility for giving direction and substance to 'EU' foreign and security policy will have to be vested in the hands of the Union's largest powers.[102] In this respect, the role of the 'EU3' (France, Germany and Britain) in negotiating with Iran on its uranium-enrichment programme may be a harbinger of things to come. It builds on the experience of great power cooperation in the Contact Group, and offers an opportunity for Europeans to demonstrate a less confrontational and belligerent approach to foreign policy than that emanating from Washington. 'European' diplomacy towards Iran has been conducted by the 'EU3' operating largely outside of the institutions and mechanisms of the second pillar, which are completely unsuited to such complex and sensitive negotiations. To date, there is little indication that 'European' diplomacy will succeed where American threats have failed. There is no doubt, however, that it represents a crucial test-case for European foreign and security policy, and that it fits realist expectations about the role of great powers in the management of international affairs.

Third, transatlantic relations, as we have previously noted, are likely to experience further 'continental drift' as the USA loses interest in, and reduces its military commitment to, Europe, and as EU member states seek to provide themselves with options for autonomous military crisis management. Deteriorating transatlantic relations might act as a catalyst for a more cohesive EU with a sharper and more effective international role. However, if great power security competition increases in a multipolar Europe, EU member states are likely to pursue a variety of strategies towards America, from balancing to bandwagoning. The divisions between 'old' and 'new' Europe that emerged during the Iraq crisis of 2002–03 are suggestive of the patterns of relations that could emerge, with some states allying with the USA and others pursuing a *Kleineuropa* ('small Europe') option of integration between a select group of 'core' states. European international politics in the early twenty-first century are thus likely to be characterised by shifting coalitions of great and middle powers.

European integration: towards an 'ever *looser* union'?

'Europe is in crisis', French Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin wrote in June 2005, shortly after the French and Dutch electorates had rejected the draft EU Constitution, thereby derailing the integrationist train.[103] The collapse of the project to give the EU its founding document for the twenty-first century, followed by bitter disputes between France and the UK over the EU budget for 2007–13, has thrown into stark relief the limits of the post-war European integration project.[104] Coming two years after the Iraq crisis demonstrated the tenuous nature of claims that the EU had a common 'European' foreign policy worthy of the name, and on top of disputes over the Turkish application for EU membership, there is no doubt that the glory-days of the European integration process are over.

From a structural realist perspective, it comes as no surprise that an integrationist project that owes its initial success to bipolarity and an American offshore balancer should face growing problems in the context of a multipolar European order. It was most unlikely that a form of institutionalised multilateral cooperation designed to address the very specific needs and concerns of the post-war period (namely agriculture, coal and steel) by fostering 'deep integration' between a group of relatively cohesive states from the Rhineland heartlands of Western Europe would survive German unification and the eastern enlargement of the EU.[105] The Cold War model of West European integration reached its zenith in the Maastricht Treaty on European Union, which witnessed the completion of the 'single market' agenda of the 1980s and the launch of the EMU project (resulting in the adoption of a single currency amongst 12 states in the 'Eurozone'). But this model is no longer viable in a Union of 25 which extends from Lapland to the Mediterranean, and from the Atlantic to the Black Sea.

The central domestic problem facing the EU is the lack of a solid domestic

constituency for the integration project. The European integration process has primarily been driven by political elites, who enjoyed a permissive consensus during much of the Cold War. But this permissive consensus has disintegrated as bipolarity has metamorphosed into multipolarity, and as the EU has expanded into a much more diverse and less cohesive organisation of 25. Notions that the EU can develop into a unified 'post-national polity' have foundered due to the lack of a 'European nation' and an acute 'democratic deficit'. Nationalism remains a potent political force in contemporary Europe, and European nation-states – whatever pressures they might face from economic globalisation – continue to provide the primary focus of political loyalties and identities.

Hopes for a more supranational, 'postmodern' European polity also run counter to the systemic pressures of multipolarity. States will undoubtedly seek to develop cooperation in areas of common concern, including regional economic cooperation in the face of US and Japanese competition;[106] security cooperation to tackle transnational crime, terrorism and proliferation;[107] and regional milieu-shaping. But in balanced multipolarity, where concerns with relative gains matter more than in bipolarity, and in an EU of 25 where member states have diverse priorities and preferences, such cooperation is more likely to take place on an intergovernmental basis led by the European Council, rather than through a more supranational decision-making process involving the Commission and the European Parliament. EU member states – particularly the largest and most powerful of them – seem to have very little compunction in breaking the Union's rules and procedures when they perceive their vital interests to be at stake. Given heightened concern with relative gains in the context of multipolarity, EU member states will be more prone to break the rules in defence of their perceived 'national interests'. At the same time, none of the larger powers in the EU are likely to subordinate their relations with other great powers – such as the USA, Russia or China – to a 'common' EU foreign and security policy. Consequently, systemic pressures in multipolarity favour De Gaulle's limited vision of a 'Europe of nation-states' rather than Jean Monnet's vision of an 'ever closer union'.

The dream of an 'ever closer union' is now over, and with it the aspiration to create a European *puissance* that will take its place as one of the international system's great powers. The prospect now is for an 'ever *looser* union', characterised by various combinations of 'differentiated integration', flexibility and 'variable geometry'. The European Council may well seek to develop cooperation and policy harmonisation around specific issues of common concern, but such cooperation will be constrained by the 'trilateral asymmetries' between the EU3. These trilateral asymmetries reflect the uneven pattern of national interests between Europe's big three.[108] Thus while France and Germany share a commitment to continuing political cooperation and have a mutual interest in the health of the Euro, Britain has other financial interests and political concerns. On the other hand, France and the UK have shared interests which set them apart from Germany given their permanent membership of the UN Security Council, their

nuclear arsenals and their ability to project military power overseas. Britain and Germany, however, share a common interest in reducing their EU budgetary contributions, reforming the CAP and fostering an open global trading order – all of which France opposes. Despite the hiccup of the Iraq War, Germany and the UK are also interested in a healthy transatlantic relationship, and cooperate closely together in NATO. The weakest dyad in this triangular relationship is that between the UK and France, given Britain's long-standing concern to prevent any one state or group of states from dominating Europe, and French aspirations to use the EU as a means of amplifying French influence and contributing to the formation of a multipolar global order. Nonetheless, the crucial political variable which will determine the future of the European integration process is German *Europapolitik*. Germany remains the lynchpin of the European balance of power and has the strongest economy in the EU. Its preferences will therefore be decisive in shaping the future of the EU and the typology of great power relations in a multipolar Europe.

7

GERMANY

Europe's *Zentralmacht*

> Germany, a reunited Germany, has a critical size. It is too big to play no role in the balance of forces, and too small to keep the forces around it in balance by itself.
>
> Chancellor Kurt-Georg Kiesinger, 17 June 1967[1]

In the twenty-first century as in the twentieth, Germany will play a central role in the European security system. Germany has long been the fulcrum of the European balance of power, and the lodestone of its institutional architecture. Because of its central geographical location in the heart of the continent – its *Mittellage* – Germany is Europe's *Zentralmacht*,[2] strategically located on the cross-roads of Europe: between the Gaullic West and the Slavic East, and between the Scandinavian North and Latin South. Its *Mittellage* means that Germany has more neighbours than any other European country, and consequently how it acts on the international stage has far-reaching implications for the regional balance of power.

For much of the history of the Westphalian states' system, Germany has been the 'object' of great power competition and rivalry; with unification through 'blood and iron' in 1871, however, Germany was transformed from the 'anvil' to the 'hammer' of European power politics.[3] No longer the weak centre of the European security system, Bismarck transformed Germany into a major actor in the diplomatic and strategic interactions of the great powers. As industrialisation gathered momentum in the late nineteenth century, German power quickly outpaced that of its main rivals.[4] The resultant destabilisation of the balance of power created the structural conditions for the two world wars of the twentieth century, both of which were fought to prevent German hegemony over continental Europe.

Divided Germany

During the Cold War, Germany was a divided nation in the fractured centre of a bipolar Europe. Burdened by the terrible legacy of the 12 years of Hitler's

'thousand year Reich', the *Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (the Federal Republic of Germany) became a semi-sovereign member of NATO and the EEC. Germany's sovereignty was formally constrained by the Four Powers' agreement over Berlin and 'Germany as a whole', and its exposed geostrategic location along the fault-line of the East–West conflict left it dependent on the USA and NATO for its security. Bipolarity also provided the external systemic context for important unit-level changes in German politics and society. The Western allies served as the progenitors, midwives and wet-nurses for a liberal-democratic political system, which in turn provided the domestic structural context for a broader and equally significant unit-level change – the recasting of West German national identity.[5] As we have seen, bipolarity provided the context for a taming of nationalism and a lessening of concerns with relative gains, thus making cooperation between former adversaries more feasible. In the case of the *Bundesrepublik*, it facilitated a process of rapprochement with France, its long-time rival and competitor for European hegemony. Bipolarity provided a structural environment that was conducive to Adenauer's policy of *Westbindung* (Western integration), in contrast to multipolarity and great power rivalry in the 1920s, which constituted a structural impediment to Gustav Stresemann's aspirations for Franco-German rapprochement in the interwar years.[6]

Whilst keeping alive the long-term goal of reunification on Western terms, the Bonn republic strove to profile itself as a responsible and reliable member of the Euro-Atlantic community. It developed close strategic partnerships with the USA and France, with priority given to the transatlantic relationship given its existential security concerns. It also consciously eschewed any hint of an *Alleingang* ('going-it alone') or *Sonderweg* ('special [German] way'), and cultivated a foreign policy style characterised by a culture of modesty, restraint and reserve, rarely articulating any distinctive German national interests, but preferring to speak 'in Europe's name'.[7] Nevertheless, as the post-war German *Wirtschaftswunder* ('economic miracle') gathered pace and the Bundeswehr became integral to the collective territorial defence of Western Europe, the Bonn republic proved adept at shaping its external milieu and influencing policy inside the multilateral institutions to which it belonged.[8] By the time the East–West conflict was drawing to a close, Germany – like its former wartime ally Japan – was widely seen as a cross between a *Zivilmacht* (a 'civilian power'[9]) and a *Handelsstaat* (a 'trading nation'[10]), pursuing its economic and political concerns peacefully through multilateral institutions, and thereby – it was argued – contributing to the 'civilianisation' of international relations in Europe and beyond.

Reunification and the European balance of power

The end of Cold War bipolarity transformed Germany and Europe. As the foundations of Soviet power in Central Europe crumbled and the Berlin Wall fell, the Kohl government moved swiftly and unexpectedly to absorb the failed East German state into the proven democratic structures of the *Bundesrepublik* –

thereby considerably enhancing Germany's relative power capabilities. As Margaret Thatcher put it, with characteristic bluntness, 'they got bigger and we didn't'.[11] Reunification increased the population of the Federal Republic from 63 million to 80 million, and enlarged its territory from 248,000 to 375,000 sq. km. The Federal Republic was undoubtedly the clear winner from the end of the Cold War, opportunistically pursuing a strategy of power maximisation that achieved its long sought-after reunification. Reunited Germany is now Europe's *Zentralmacht*: situated at the geopolitical heart of Europe, it is no longer a divided nation in a bipolar continent, but the fulcrum of the European balance of power.[12] No longer constrained by NATO and the American 'pacifier', and with the strongest economy in the EU along with new opportunities in its historic stamping-ground of *Mitteleuropa*, a fully-sovereign Germany is now free to explore a wider palette of foreign policy options than during the Cold War.[13]

Despite its absorption of the five new *Länder* reconstituted from the wreckage of the former GDR and its re-emergence as Europe's *Zentralmacht*, the *Bundesrepublik* is not strong enough to overturn or destabilise the European balance of power. Germany may be the most powerful country in Europe, but it is not a superpower, and does not possess the potential power capabilities to make a credible bid for hegemony.[14] German economic power and political influence are not such that it can overturn the existing European equilibrium, or recast multilateral structures like the EU and NATO in its own image.[15] Germany has a strong economic, political and strategic presence in *Mitteleuropa*, but does not exercise unrestrained hegemony in the post-communist East in the way it did in the 1930s. This is not to say that reunification has not caused concern in Paris, London, Moscow or Warsaw, nor that Germany's enhanced power capabilities have not affected political calculations throughout Europe and North America: clearly, as we shall see, reunification has had important – and sometimes unsettling – implications for the pattern of diplomatic and strategic interactions in the European security system. However, German reunification has not led to unbalanced multipolarity, and consequently has not generated intense security competition. Indeed, it is telling that, in contrast to unification by 'blood and iron' in 1870, reunification in 1990 was achieved peacefully through democratic elections and international agreement.[16]

Germany's ranking and geographical location within the structural distribution of power in contemporary Europe generate a particular set of foreign and security policy dilemmas. As Chancellor Kiesinger noted in 1967, 'Germany, a reunited Germany, has a critical size. It is too big to play no role in the balance of forces, and too small to keep the forces around it in balance by itself'.[17] This nicely captures Germany's distinctive position in the European balance of power. Reunified Germany is the single most powerful state in contemporary Europe in terms of its relative power capabilities, but it is not strong enough to refashion the European security order according to its own preferences alone – in other words, it is not a hegemonic power in Europe.[18] Nonetheless, its power capabilities mean that it is the pivot and fulcrum of the European balance of

power: whatever Germany does will have important consequences for European affairs – consequences with which other countries might not always be comfortable. Germany will thus remain the central actor in the European security system in the twenty-first century, its foreign and security policies 'shaped and shoved' by the structural pressures of balanced multipolarity.

From the 'Bonn' to the 'Berlin' republic

Germany, then, is back; but not as a superpower, nor as an aspiring hegemon. Rather, it is now a 'normal' great power, occupying a pivotal position at the heart of a regional security system characterised by balanced multipolarity. No longer Willy Brandt's 'economic giant but political pygmy', Germany has relearnt its old great power role and assumed the responsibilities that its enhanced power capabilities and transformed geostrategic situation entail. However, this return to great power status did not occur automatically or mechanistically as a consequence of the demise of bipolarity, but emerged from a process of strategic learning as Germany responded to the changed incentive structure afforded by the structural distribution of power. Realist international theory, one should remember, is not deterministic or mechanistic; it is a parsimonious theory that analyses 'the pressures of structure on states and not with how states will respond to the pressures'.[19] As we have seen, states are 'situated actors', capable of acting consciously, reflexively and strategically, within a 'strategically selective context' that favours certain actions over others as a means of realising preferences. Over time, systemically structured outcomes emerge as actors learn how best to pursue their preferences, encouraging states to acquire distinctive foreign policy 'role sets' which codify routinised patterns of behaviour.

Germany's response to the changed structural distribution of power in the international system evolved gradually and incrementally over a period of years, and was expedited by a generational change associated with the Bundestag elections of 1998. Conscious of its past crimes and misdemeanours, and sensitive to the lingering suspicions of its neighbours and allies, united Germany at first sought to perpetuate the image of a reticent, reliable and unassertive *Zivilmacht* associated with the Cold War Bonn republic. 'Continuity in the rhetoric of continuity' characterised the official discourse of the German foreign policy elite for much of the 1990s.[20] All the while, however, Germany's political class was responding to, and learning from, the changed structural pressures emanating from the international system. The process of re-learning its old great power role began during the time of Chancellor Kohl, and was consummated by Gerhard Schröder – who demonstrated Germany's new self-confidence and 'emancipation' by threatening to pursue a German *Sonderweg* during the Iraq crisis of 2002–03.

The process of strategic learning was reflected in the foreign policy debates of the mid-nineties, debates which revolved around the themes of 'normalisation' and 'responsibility' (*Verantwortung*).[21] One of the crucial catalysts for this rethinking of its international role, particularly in terms of the use of force and

of the responsibilities that accompanied great power status, was the violent break-up of Yugoslavia and the subsequent wars of Yugoslav succession. Germany's transformation from unassuming security consumer to 'normal' great power was exemplified by its response to the two major conflicts that opened and closed the 1990s: the Gulf War of 1991 and the Kosovo War of 1999. Having sat out the former on the grounds that its constitution, the *Grundgesetz*, prevented its participation in 'out-of-area' operations, the German government demonstrated few compunctions about participating in the latter.[22]

In a striking example of political symbolism, Germany's transformation from reticent and semi-sovereign *Zivilmacht* to newly-assertive *Grossmacht* coincided with the transfer of the capital and seat of government from provincial, small-town Bonn to *Weltstadt* Berlin.[23] Moreover, it took place as German troops were participating in the Kosovo War – as the headline in the *Tageszeitung* ominously noted, '*Im Krieg beginnt die "Berliner Republik"*' ('In war begins the "Berlin Republic"').[24] The transformation from the Bonn to the Berlin Republic exemplified Germany's new-found great power status, and its physical relocation from the Rhine to the Spree symbolised a shift in its geopolitical centre-of-gravity from Western Europe to *Mitteleuropa*. Born in bipolarity, the Bonn Republic looked westwards, to Paris for political rehabilitation and to Washington for its security; in the changed context of balanced multipolarity, the Berlin Republic will have to find a new diplomatic equilibrium between East and West.

Return to the *Mittellage*

No less an historical personage than Napoleon Bonaparte once asserted that 'the policy of a state lies in its geography'. As with all epigrams, this is something of a simplification, but it is undoubtedly true that Germany's foreign and security policy is inexplicable without reference to its *Mittellage*.[25] Germany's central geopolitical location means that it has always had more diplomatic balls to juggle than most.[26] With no clear geographical features to define its borders or provide it with natural defensive barriers, Germany's security has always depended on its ability to balance the conflicting pressures from West and East and avoid Bismarck's *cauchemar des coalitions* ('nightmare of coalitions'). Bipolarity provided a solution of sorts to the complications and uncertainties of the *Mittellage*; the return to balanced multipolarity has undermined the strategic imperative of *Westbindung*, and complicated the diplomatic juggling act of *sowohl als auch*.[27] The Berlin Republic now has to find a modus vivendi between its primary Western partners, France and the USA, and its key Eastern neighbours, Poland and Russia, whilst also finding a place in its diplomatic calculus for Britain, Ukraine and Turkey.

In the immediate wake of the end of the Cold War, Germany sought to find a new equilibrium between its Western partners and its former enemies in the East – most importantly with Russia, but also with the countries of East Central Europe. In terms of the latter, Poland (given its size and geopolitical importance)

was crucial.[28] A new partnership with Warsaw was seen as complementing the post-war rapprochement with France, and contributing to the forging of a Europe 'whole and free'. For much of the 1990s, therefore, the focus of German *Ostpolitik* was on Poland and *Mitteleuropa*, given the strategic aim of integrating these countries into NATO and the EU, and shaping the milieu in the post-communist East.[29] This inevitably cast a shadow over relations with Russia, which understandably felt threatened by the implications of NATO enlargement for its influence in its 'near abroad', and by the danger of exclusion from EU markets. At the same time, a subtle shift in priorities took place, as Germany increasingly placed its interests in regional milieu-shaping (and hence, its relations with France as the dual motor of the European integration process) ahead of its strategic relationship with America (a relationship which was weakened by the demise of a shared security threat).

By the early twenty-first century, however, Schröder's political opportunism and his clumsy diplomatic manoeuvring generated criticisms that German foreign policy was becoming unbalanced. Breaking with the established foreign policy traditions of the *Bundesrepublik*, Schröder aligned Germany with French ambitions to challenge America and foster a multipolar world order, precipitating a crisis in transatlantic relations. At the same time, he cultivated a close strategic partnership with Russia, conjuring up the spectre of a German–Russian condominium which was deeply worrying to Poland and others in the 'lands between'. Early indications suggest that the 'grand coalition' led by Chancellor Angela Merkel will seek to rebalance German foreign policy by cultivating better relations with Washington; finding a *modus vivendi* between France and the USA, and between the EU and NATO; and balancing its strategic partnership with Russia with closer relations with Poland.

Germany's *Mittellage* and its great power status as Europe's *Zentralmacht* suggest a new role for the Berlin Republic in balanced multipolarity – as an *ehrlicher Makler* ('honest broker'), a role Bismarck sought for the Second Empire, and one he played in the 1878 Congress of Berlin.[30] This role was played with exemplary diplomatic finesse by Chancellor Merkel during the difficult negotiations over the EU budget for 2007–13. Germany played a similar role during the 1990s in winning Russian acquiescence to NATO enlargement, and during the Kosovo War, when Foreign Minister Fischer worked hard to engage the Russians in the diplomacy that accompanied the end-game of Operation Allied Force. More recently, during her visit to Washington in January 2006, Chancellor Merkel suggested that Germany could play 'the role of mediator' for America and Russia.[31] Given Germany's weight and power capabilities, it will be the focus of much of the diplomatic and strategic exchanges in a Europe characterised by balanced multipolarity. It is therefore very much in Germany's interest to exploit its central geopolitical location and great power status in order to profile itself as an *ehrlicher Makler*. Geography may not determine Germany's destiny, but it is certainly a crucial factor affecting the structural pressures operating on the Berlin Republic in balanced multipolarity.

From *Zivilmacht* to 'Centaur'

Germany's re-emergence as a 'normal' great power has been the result of a process of strategic learning lasting a decade or more. With the transition from the Bonn to the Berlin Republic, a more self-assured, confident and occasionally assertive country has emerged.[32] On the road from Bonn to Berlin, Germany has shed its lingering instincts as a *Zivilmacht*, dropped its reflexive multilateralism and displayed little of its former *Bescheidenheit* and *Zurückhaltung* ('modesty' and 'reserve') in defining and pursuing its foreign policy objectives. In 1990, Germany recovered full sovereignty, but appeared unsure what to do with it.[33] A decade later, Germany seems much more comfortable with its new status as Europe's *Zentralmacht*.

The change in Germany's foreign and security policy role conceptions is evident from its changed attitude to the use of force.[34] At the time of the 1991 Gulf War, newly reunited Germany refused to contribute militarily to Operation Desert Storm – despite the fact that it was sanctioned by the UN Security Council – on the grounds that the *Grundgesetz* forbad a Bundeswehr role in 'out-of-area' operations. Instead, Bonn acted as a diplomatic cheerleader for the Allied coalition, and continued its tradition of 'cheque-book diplomacy' by subsidising the allies to the tune of DM13.5 billion.[35] The failure to join its NATO allies in multilateral military operations designed to reverse a clear violation of international law was widely criticised at the time as a dereliction of its responsibilities as a major power. The problem with Germany, its allies seemed to suggest, was not a potential recrudescence of militarism, but the temptations of 'free-riding' gilded with pacifist sentiments and justified by references to Germany's character as a *Zivilmacht*.

Cognizant of this criticism, and aware that its preferences for the reshaping of European and international security would not carry weight if it failed to live up to the responsibilities that reunification entailed, the Kohl government began to prepare the ground for an 'out-of-area' role for the Bundeswehr. Using a 'salami slice' approach designed to minimise domestic opposition to a more interventionist military role, it began deploying Bundeswehr units in UN-sanctioned humanitarian operations in Somalia and Cambodia, and used the Luftwaffe to distribute humanitarian relief to the Kurds in Northern Iraq and to Sarajevo.[36] The crucial arena in which a new role for the Bundeswehr was worked out and legitimised, however, was the Balkans – which provided an abject lesson in the limitations of 'soft power', and demonstrated the complexities of coalitional military crisis management in the context of balanced multipolarity.[37] Following a constitutional ruling by the *Bundesverfassungsgericht* (the Federal Constitutional Court) in July 1994, the road was free for an 'out-of-area' role for the Bundeswehr. With the signing of the Dayton peace accords, Germany contributed 4,000 troops to IFOR, the largest peace-time operation in the history of the Bundeswehr.[38]

The transformation of the *Bundesrepublik* from a *Zivilmacht* to a normal

great power 'centaur', willing and able to use military coercion in support of its diplomatic goals, was evident from the Kosovo War in 1999. Despite the lack of a UN Security Council mandate and the dubious status of Operation Deliberate Force under international law, the 'Red–Green' coalition government evinced few concerns about participating in offensive military operations against a sovereign state. After 9/11, Chancellor Schröder explicitly stated his goal of removing the lingering domestic political taboo on the use of military force.[39] The government also placed renewed emphasis on the process of restructuring the Bundeswehr for expeditionary missions. Germany contributed special forces to support Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan, and 1,200 troops to the NATO peace-support mission in Kabul and the northern provinces (the International Security Assistance Force, ISAF).[40] Schröder's defence minister, Peter Struck, argued that this was necessary because in an age of globalisation, 'Germany security must be defended on the Hindu Kush'.[41] In the light of these shifts in Germany's willingness to use military force for power projection out-of-area, Schröder's opportunist efforts to position himself as a vociferous critic of US plans to wage a preventive war against Saddam Hussein should not be seen as evidence of the persistence of a 'civilian power' strategic culture. Rather, they were part of a power political struggle waged by a self-confident and assertive great power flexing its new-found muscles.[42]

In two crucial respects, however, Germany's military capabilities do not reflect its overall power capabilities. It remains relatively weak in terms of power-projection capabilities and does not possess nuclear weapons. The process of post-Cold War defence restructuring has been painfully slow in Germany, not least because defence expenditure has remained low compared to its main NATO partners. Nonetheless, the Bundeswehr is being gradually and incrementally restructured for expeditionary warfare, and within the next ten years should have an enhanced capability for power projection based on leaner but more effective armed forces.[43] In the context of balanced multipolarity, there is no immediate pressure to acquire nuclear weapons, which would, in any case, be difficult to do given current domestic and international political attitudes. However, if the international security environment were to sharply deteriorate, and the German government wished to acquire its own independent nuclear deterrent, there is no doubt that it has the scientific and technical expertise, and the economic potential, so to do. Germany's decision to go down the nuclear road would depend greatly on the credibility of American extended deterrence within the framework of NATO, as well as on the security guarantees offered by France and Britain, who might seek to forestall an independent German nuclear capability by offering to 'Europeanise' their own deterrent forces. At present, however, systemic pressures are not such that Germany is likely to embark on the economically costly and politically contentious path of developing its own nuclear deterrent.

Gulliver unbound

A central theme of liberal-idealist writings on Germany is that the Federal Republic is a 'tamed power', characterised by a 'reflexive multilateralism' and exercising its substantial structural power discretely and indirectly through milieu-shaping within multilateral institutions.[44] Germany, it is argued, has been a willing 'Gulliver', content to have its freedom of action constrained by a thousand threads woven by smaller states using multilateral institutions and international law. Such arguments were first articulated during the Cold War, when the Federal Republic was indeed a 'semi-sovereign' security supplicant locked within the constraints of bipolarity. The subsequent willingness of reunited Germany to accept the Maastricht Treaty's integrationist project for a single currency and political union gave credence to claims that the Bonn Republic remained a willing Gulliver. However, as the 1990s unfolded, and Germany adjusted to the changed structure of power in Europe by re-learning its old great power role, the Berlin Republic has proven a reluctant Gulliver, and has increasingly sought to loosen the 'ties that bind'.[45]

This is most evident from the shift in attitude towards the EU and the European integration process. For Kohl's generation, shaped by the *Stunde Null* of 1945 and the East–West conflict, European integration was a question of 'war and peace'. For the generation now in power in the Berlin Republic, however, the EU is seen through the prism of German national interests in much more instrumental, calculating and pragmatic terms. From the mid-nineties on, the German government became much more willing to articulate and pursue its national interests, and in the latter part of the decade it was noted that Germany was becoming increasingly 'British' in its approach to the EU.[46] As part of its more general move away from 'cheque-book diplomacy', the German government became increasingly unwilling to serve as the *Milchkuh* or paymaster of the EU.[47] Although it was a leading advocate of enlargement, it was clearly unhappy about the financial costs involved, and thus sought to limit its overall budget contribution. The Berlin government's new assertiveness can also be seen from its insistence that German be recognised as an official EU language, and from its resistance to attempts at Amsterdam to establish a common EU asylum policy. More significantly, it has not hesitated to break the eurozone's Stability and Growth Pact when the latter's rules constrained its monetary policy.

In short, Germany is no longer the 'reflexive multilateralist' that it appeared to be in bipolarity. Its approach to multilateral cooperation is increasingly driven by its own national interests and by more pragmatic and instrumental considerations. This does not mean that the Berlin Republic seeks a Gaullist-style independence: in the context of balanced multipolarity, Germany recognises the benefits of regional economic cooperation as a means of competing with the USA and Japan; for milieu-shaping in Europe's near abroad (especially East Central Europe); and for the collective pursuit of shared second-order ethical

concerns. But such cooperation arises because of the benefits it offers to perceived national interests, not from an altruistic commitment to integration as a goal in and of itself, nor as an attempt at 'self-binding', like a modern-day Odysseus tying himself to the mast of multilateralism to avoid the siren-calls of power.

At the same time, Germany has been keen to shape post-Cold War European order by utilising its great power status. In Bosnia, it soon became apparent that the CFSP did not provide a suitable forum for crisis management and conflict resolution, and so the focus of German diplomacy shifted from the EU to the more exclusive 'Contact Group'. It has since taken an active role in the trilateral diplomacy that has proliferated in the context of balanced multipolarity, forming one corner of the triangle in meetings of the French and Russians, French and British, French and Polish, and so on. The role of the 'EU3' has been particularly important, both as a means of conducting 'European' diplomacy with Iran, and in launching the proposals for EU 'battlegroups' and structural economic reforms. This new-found awareness of its role in the great power management of international politics has found its logical expression in the German campaign for permanent membership of the UN Security Council.[48]

Transatlantic relations

During the Cold War, its security dependence on the United States, along with its circumscribed sovereignty, meant that the Bonn Republic played the role of loyal transatlantic ally. In the context of balanced multipolarity, however, with a greatly improved security environment, Germany has no such need for unconditional loyalty. The central concern of German grand strategy is no longer cultivating a close relationship with the USA against a perceived Soviet threat, but of finding the appropriate balance between good relations with the American hyperpower and good relations with Europe's other great powers, including the Eurasian great power to its East.

During the 1990s, as Germany re-acquired the instincts of a great power, it continued to place a high premium on close relations with the USA. Although the proposal to become 'partners in leadership' was not taken up, Germany maintained close relations with Washington, and actively promoted US engagement with European security – notably in the Balkans. Nonetheless, during this period, two clear trends became manifest: first, a shift in emphasis from Washington to Paris as the EU's importance as a framework for multilateral cooperation and regional milieu-shaping became evident; and second, growing differences with Washington on a plethora of issues, ranging from a series of trade disputes, Kyoto, the International Criminal Court, the ABM Treaty and the role of NATO. Underlying all of these disputes was a broader concern about America's growing unilateralist tendencies and the capriciousness of the unipolar hyperpower. These two trends reached their culmination in the Iraq crisis, which pitted the 'St Petersberg' triangle of France, Germany and Russia against

America, and led to a major crisis in German–American relations. Having discovered the new-found room for manoeuvre enjoyed by the Berlin Republic in balanced multipolarity, Schröder aligned Germany with France's goal of a multipolar world order, and signalled his government's determination to pursue its own special path (*Sonderweg*) independently from Washington. This diplomatic crisis was accompanied by a mood of anti-American sentiment that was shamelessly exploited during the 2002 election campaign, leading one of Schröder's ministerial colleagues to make an invidious comparison between Hitler and George W. Bush.[49]

As part of her attempt to 'rebalance' German foreign policy, Chancellor Merkel has sought to improve relations with Washington, and position Germany as America's primary European interlocutor.[50] Her visit to Washington in January 2006 clearly constituted a new chapter in German–American relations, even if differences over the status of inmates in Guantanamo Bay, CIA renditions and Iraq remain. Critics who spoke of a 'success without substance'[51] miss the point: German–American relations will never return to the hot-house intimacy and one-sided dependency of the Cold War, because the structural conditions that fostered this US–BRD relationship have passed. Germany will continue to have important differences with the US hyperpower over the 'war on terrorism', trade and global security issues, given the broader trend towards continental drift in transatlantic relations. But Germany also has an interest in cooperating with America on specific issues such as Iran, Kosovo, the Middle East, Afghanistan, preserving an open global trading regime, proliferation and winning a seat on the UN Security Council. Germany's objective is to have influence on, and cooperation with, the most powerful state in the international system, without having to subordinate its national interests (be they economic, strategic or political) to American priorities. For the United States, the goal is to have good relations with Europe's *Zentralmacht*, given the Berlin Republic's influential role in the EU and its strategic partnership with Russia, and more generally, because of its wider economic clout and political influence in Europe. Germany, it is said, can potentially act as the *Türöffner* ('door-opener') for American influence in Europe – in a very real sense, taking up the role of 'partners in leadership' offered by George W. Bush's father to Helmut Kohl.[52]

Germany's relations with the United States have clearly undergone a profound sea-change with the demise of bipolarity. This reflects the broader trend in transatlantic relations towards continental drift and multiple bilateralism. But in a context of balanced multipolarity, both sides have an interest in close cooperation: America to preserve its influence in Europe, and Germany to ensure its influence on milieu-shaping in Europe and the wider international system. Tensions will remain over issues such as Turkish membership of the EU, the war on terror, Germany's failure to modernise its military capabilities and the future of the EU, but there are many issues were they share common interests. The US–German relationship is therefore likely to be characterised by a pragmatic

and interest-driven approach to cooperation in the context of balanced multipolarity.

Franco-German cooperation

While the Bonn Republic looked to Washington and NATO for its security during the Cold War, it looked to Paris and the European integration project for political rehabilitation and renewed international legitimacy. Rapprochement with France and integration into West European institutions was central to Konrad Adenauer's *Europapolitik*, strategic objectives that were facilitated by bipolarity and the reassuring presence of the American 'pacifier'. Given formal expression in the 1963 Elysée Treaty, the Franco-German axis soon emerged as one of the closest and most significant bilateral relations in European international politics, providing the motor of the West European integration process and the foundation of wider regional cooperation.

Franco-German cooperation has never been easy or problem-free.[53] On the contrary, it has been essentially elite-driven, and has required considerable diplomatic time and energy to sooth friction and manage bilateral disputes. Although Paris and Bonn shared a commitment to 'reconciliation' and building 'Europe', they disagreed on key issues such as transatlantic relations and *Ostpolitik*. Whereas the French saw the EEC/EC as an alternative to superpower 'hegemony', the Germans believed that the European integration process should be developed in ways that complemented American leadership, rather than challenged it. Despite this unresolved tension, and occasional resentful mutterings by other EEC members about a Franco-German condominium, relations between Paris and Bonn ripened and deepened during the Cold War, based on an implicit agreement: French political leadership would be enhanced by Germany's economic weight, and in return Paris would facilitate the Bonn Republic's international rehabilitation. This tacit agreement worked well during the Cold War when West Germany was a 'wounded giant' that had no pretensions to great power status, and was content to allow France to act as if it were still a great power, with all the illusions of *grandeur* and self-importance that such claims implied.

German unification and the demise of bipolarity threatened the subtle equilibrium that had emerged between Bonn and Paris during the Cold War. France was acutely sensitive about its loss in power and status relative to Germany. Not only had Germany increased in size and potential, it also enjoyed greater room for manoeuvre in international affairs. Whereas France depended on German cooperation for the success of its European ambitions, Germany's *Mittellage* gave it other options: it could draw closer to the USA as a privileged 'partner in leadership', or cultivate new relations with Russia and the countries to its immediate east.[54] France thus responded to the changed structural environment by seeking to bind united Germany closer into European structures of economic and political cooperation. At the same time, the Bonn Republic strove to

reassure Paris that nothing had really changed, and that their partnership had not been affected by the tectonic shifts of 1989–91.[55]

German protestations to the contrary, it was clear that unification and multipolarity had indeed important consequences for the Franco-German relationship. As the 1990s unfolded and Germany acquired what Chancellor Schröder termed 'the new consciousness of an adult nation', a gradual but perceptible shift occurred in the relative influence of France and Germany.[56] No longer content to play second fiddle to France, the German government was much more confident and self-assured in articulating its national interests and ensuring a more balanced political partnership. The 1996 common strategic concept spoke of 'parity' between the two countries, but in many policy areas France found itself having to conform to German policy standards. There were also a series of policy differences over issues as diverse as the recognition of Croatia and Slovenia, the GATT round of 1992–94, CAP, EU enlargement and the EU budget. Nonetheless, the Franco-German axis has endured – indeed, prospered – and remains the closest and most institutionalised bilateral relationship within Europe's balanced multipolarity.

One reason for this is that with the end of its security dependence on the United States, German cooperation with France is no longer constrained by the need to accommodate the concerns of Washington. During the 1990s, there was a perceptible trend towards a shift in emphasis in the balance of German *Westpolitik* from the primacy of America and NATO to that of France and the EU. This reflects Germany's interest as a regional great power and its focus on milieu-shaping in Europe and its near abroad. The close relationship with France was actively fostered by Chancellor Kohl, and after an initial frostiness in Franco-German relations in the first year or so of the Red–Green coalition, Chancellor Schröder also moved to deepen political and diplomatic cooperation with Paris. This Franco-German alignment reached its apogee in 2002–03, when Schröder aligned himself with France and Russia in opposition to US plans for a 'pre-emptive' war against Iraq.

The durability of the Franco-German relationship is often seen as something of an anomaly for structural realism. Nevertheless, it can be explained theoretically in three ways: first, bipolarity has given way to balanced multipolarity, not unbalanced multipolarity. Germany has become stronger relative to France, but not so strong that Germany is a potential hegemon. This change in the structural distribution of power has, as Realists would expect, led to a shift in the relative influence of France and Germany, but not to balancing coalitions against Germany. Structural pressures are not strong enough to break apart France and Germany, but they have provided an incentive for rebalancing the relationship. Second, underneath the symbolism and idealistic rhetoric, their cooperation is increasingly based on a hard-nosed assessment of their 'enlightened' self-interest. Their interests are not identical, but converge around a strategic calculation that cooperation is mutually beneficial.[57] Both sides gain, although in different ways. Together, they can shape the EU agenda and the patterns of

strategic interaction in Europe; if they acted separately and independently, their influence in the context of balanced multipolarity would be significantly reduced.[58] Third, there is an element of 'path dependency' that sustains the relationship. As we have seen, structural pressures 'shape and shove' a state's grand strategy and national role conceptions, and once formed, these prove slow to change. Prudence is encouraged by balanced multipolarity, which provides limited opportunities for assertive power maximisation strategies.[59] Consequently, dramatic developments such as the break-up of the Franco-German axis are unlikely as long as balanced multipolarity endures.

With the advent of the 'grand coalition' in 2005, German *Westpolitik* has already evinced signs of a 'rebalancing' of Germany's relationship between its two key Western partners, France and the United States. Already in the last years of Schröder's Red–Green coalition, there were growing criticisms of his policy of aligning Germany too closely with French aspirations for a multipolar world, precipitating a crisis in German–US relations. Chancellor Merkel has made clear her determination to improve transatlantic relations and avoid having to chose between Paris and Washington in the future. Quite what this will mean for the day-to-day practice of Franco-German relations remains to be seen, but a structural analysis suggests that no major breach in their cooperation is likely. What is clear, however, is that in an enlarged EU and a multipolar Europe, the effectiveness of the Franco-German motor has been weakened. Together, they continue to exercise considerable veto power over decisions they dislike, but they are less able to set the agenda as they did in the past. Consequently, more diverse coalitions and complex patterns of diplomatic interaction are inevitable in different policy areas. This has already led to the greater use of trilateral diplomacy, a trend which Germany is likely to encourage – given that, as Europe's *Zentralmacht*, it will be an essential corner of any significant triangle or *directoire*.

Looking East: the dilemmas of *Ostpolitik*

Germany's relations with its Western allies, France and the United States, have been significantly recalibrated since unification and the demise of bipolarity. Nonetheless, they have not been refashioned beyond all recognition, but exhibit enduring strands of continuity. The same cannot be said for Germany's relations with its Eastern neighbours – all of which have experienced a profoundly unsettling 'triple revolution' affecting their domestic constitutional order, their economies and their foreign policies. No longer members – unwilling or otherwise – of a hostile military alliance dominated by the Soviet Union, the new democracies of *Mitteleuropa* have now succeeded in 'returning to Europe', at least to the extent that they have become members of NATO and the EU.[60] The Soviet superpower has also disintegrated, leaving a belt of small and medium-sized states in Eastern Europe, and a Russia that is a no longer a superpower with aspirations for European hegemony, but a Eurasian great power with much-

reduced capabilities. The geopolitical configuration of Central and Eastern Europe has thus been profoundly transformed, with the incorporation of much of *Mitteleuropa* into Euro-Atlantic structures; a weakened, but increasingly assertive Russia; an authoritarian Belarus; an unstable and divided Moldova; and a Ukrainian state whose political future is uncertain, and contested from within and without. As it looks East, therefore, reunified Germany faces new opportunities and challenges – and, perhaps, new temptations.

Since unification, Germany has cultivated closer relations with its immediate neighbours in the Visegrad group (Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia) and the Baltic states. The quality and intensity of these relations is uneven, giving rise to a pattern of differentiated and asymmetrical 'multiple bilateralism' reflecting the varying influences of history, economics and strategic significance. Given its relative size and regional aspirations, Poland is Germany's key partner in *Mitteleuropa*. Since the end of the Cold War, Germany has sought to cultivate a strategic partnership with Warsaw, presenting this as the logical consummation of Willy Brandt's *Ostpolitik*, and as the Eastern complement to the Franco-German process of post-war reconciliation.[61] Germany's relations with Poland are clearly less important and more asymmetrical than those with France, and the path to reconciliation has been uneven and bumpy; their unhappy history as neighbours is reflected in the old Polish adage that 'as long as the world exists a German would never be a brother to a Pole'.[62] Despite this inauspicious starting-point, both sides have striven to improve their bilateral relations, through regular government-to-government consultations as well as cross-border cooperation. In addition, a number of new institutional networks have been created: Germany has involved Poland in tripartite military cooperation with Denmark in the framework of NATO, and with France in the 'Weimarer triangle'.

Relations with the Baltic states and the other Visegrad countries have been much less developed than those with Poland, and have tended to reflect residual historical baggage and their relative economic importance. Relations with the Czech Republic have been complicated by the legacy of the war and the Benes decrees; relations with Hungary (a wartime ally) have generally been businesslike, focusing on investment and trade; relations with Slovakia are underdeveloped given Slovakia's small economy and the long dominance of the unsavoury populist Meciar on Slovak domestic politics (which soured Bratislava's relations with its neighbours). Nonetheless, for all countries in *Mitteleuropa*, Germany is once again their main trading partner and an influential factor in their diplomacy and domestic politics. This asymmetrical dependence has produced ambivalent feelings: as the Czechs are fond of saying, 'the only thing worse than being dominated by the German economy is not being dominated by it'.[63]

One source of acute sensitivity and anxiety for the new democracies of East Central Europe is that they live in the shadow of Eastern Europe's great power – Russia. This significantly complicates their relations with Germany, because while countries like Poland and the Baltic states are wary of Russia and sceptical

of its reformist and democratic credentials, Germany – along with France, Britain and Italy –is not directly threatened by Russia, and is cognizant of its importance as a partner in managing wider regional and international problems. The East Central Europeans thus tend to be suspicious of German–Russian relations when they are good, and worried when they are poor: in the words of a well-known proverb, 'the grass gets trampled whether the elephants fight or make love'.[64]

In the early 1990s, there seemed little indication that Germany would be tempted by a 'Russia first' or 'New Rapallo' option.[65] Economically, Russia was in free-fall, and seemed to offer fewer opportunities for profitable investment or mutually beneficial trade than the East Central Europeans; politically, its domestic development under the unpredictable leadership of Boris Yeltsin was ambiguous, and its foreign policy orientation unpredictable. Initially, Germany focused on expediting the withdrawal of Russian troops from eastern Germany and Eastern Europe, and limiting the risks of inadvertent nuclear proliferation from the former Soviet Union. Later, the Bonn government sought to minimise Russian objections to NATO enlargement and to encourage Moscow to engage more constructively in the Balkan imbroglio. However, with Yeltsin's talk of a 'cold peace' in December 1994, and the war in Chechnya, the prospects for a cooperative and mutually beneficial relationship with Russia did not seem propitious. Given Germany's role as the advocate of the Eastern enlargement of NATO and the EU, along with its growing economic interests in East Central Europe, it seemed that with the end of the Cold War the focus of German *Ostpolitik* had switched from Moscow to Warsaw and *Mitteleuropa*.

By the end of the decade, however, it was evident that both Berlin and Moscow were interested in developing closer bilateral relations. With the growing self-confidence of Chancellor Schröder's Berlin Republic, and the economic revival of President Putin's Russia, conditions were ripe for a twenty-first century 'Rapallo'. Chancellor Schröder made clear his intention to place relations with Russia on the same basis as those with Western partners, and neither Russian atrocities in Chechnya nor the creeping authoritarianism that followed the 'September revolution' of 2004 have significantly affected this partnership between neighbouring great powers. The new German–Russian partnership was facilitated by warm personal relations between Putin and Schröder, but was built on hard-nosed economic, strategic and political interests. Economically, relations between the two have grown substantially over recent years; Schröder was particularly adept at using his good political relations with Putin to give German firms a competitive advantage in negotiating trade deals and exploiting investment opportunities. Energy has also been a crucial factor: Gazprom now supplies 44 per cent of Germany's natural gas,[66] and Schröder was instrumental in the project to construct the North European Gas Pipeline under the Baltic Sea, bypassing Ukraine, Poland and the Baltic States (much to their chagrin). Strategically, Germany and Russia have a common interest in sharing intelligence on, and coordinating their responses to, Islamic militants, international

terrorist networks and transnational criminal organisations. Politically, Russian membership of the UN Security Council and the G8 gives it an important voice on global economic and security issues; Moscow's cooperation is vital in addressing a whole raft of international security concerns, from proliferation and terrorism, to the search for diplomatic solutions to regional security problems in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Central Asia, the Middle East and South Asia. Last but not least, Russian support is vital for the German campaign to secure permanent membership of the UN Security Council – which would consummate the Berlin Republic's claims to great power status.

The changed alignment of great power relations made possible by the emergence of balanced multipolarity was demonstrated by the diplomatic preludes to the Iraq War. Germany aligned herself with both France and Russia in opposing American and British attempts to resolve by military coercion the crisis occasioned by Saddam Hussein's persistent non-compliance with successive UN Security Council resolutions. In so doing, Schröder's government earned not only the hostility of Washington, but also alienated the more Atlanticist-orientated countries of *Mitteleuropa*. These countries were instinctively suspicious of German–Russian cooperation, and resented the Franco-German presumption to speak 'in Europe's name' – a resentment that was aggravated by President Chirac's arrogant dismissal of the 'Letter of Eight' and the 'Vilnius Ten Letter', and his suggestion that they had no right to voice an opinion on a major issue of world affairs that differed from that of Paris and Berlin.

Differences over Iraq between Germany and the countries of East Central Europe – above all, Poland and the Baltic states – were compounded by the continuing legacy of the Second World War. Germany's relations with its Eastern neighbours can never escape the shadow of the past, but historical controversies tend to intensify when other issues complicate bilateral relations. The depth of Polish suspicion of German–Russian cooperation is evident from the unsavoury comparison by Radek Sikorski, the Polish Defence Minister, of the Northern Gas Pipeline deal to the 1939 Hitler–Stalin pact.[67] Given disputes over the Northern Gas Pipeline, the German decision to build a memorial to those expelled from Poland and the Czech Republic after 1945 was taken by the Poles and Czechs as evidence that Germany was seeking to 'relativise' its war crimes.[68] This led to renewed claims for compensation from both Poland and the Czech Republic, and a marked increase in anti-German rhetoric during the Polish election in 2005. Above all, there was a strong feeling that Germany was succumbing to the temptations of power, and doing deals with Moscow over their heads. The elephants were making love, and once again, it seemed, the grass was being crushed.

With the advent to power of Merkel's 'red–black' grand coalition, an opportunity has arisen to 'rebalance' Germany's *Ostpolitik*. Early indications suggest that greater efforts to assuage the concerns of the East Central Europeans will be made whilst preserving cooperative relations with Russia.[69] Relations with Moscow have changed in style but not in substance: Chancellor

Merkel has spoken of a 'strategic partnership' with Moscow, rather than 'friendship', and has indicated that this relationship is not underpinned by the same shared values that unite Germany and its Western partners. Whereas Schröder described Putin as an 'impeccable democrat', Merkel has openly criticised Russia's clamp-down on externally-funded human rights organisations and its policy towards Chechnya. She also held a high-profile meeting with representatives of human rights groups during her first visit to Moscow in January 2006. Nonetheless, Russia is simply too important economically and politically to cold shoulder, and it is highly improbable that second-order normative concerns will be allowed to impede trade and investment opportunities, or energy supplies.

Under Chancellor Merkel, German *Ostpolitik* is likely to be less focused on Moscow, and characterised more by an Eastern variation of *sowohl als auch* that seeks to balance a strategic partnership with Russia with better relations with Poland and *Mitteleuropa.* Russia will remain an indispensable strategic partner and close diplomatic interlocutor for the Berlin Republic, even though the two are likely to clash over milieu-shaping in Russia's 'near abroad' – which is now Germany and the EU's 'new neighbourhood'. The focus of these tensions, and the possible catalyst for renewed security competition in the region, will be Ukraine – a country whose future is critical to the sub-regional balance of power in Central and Eastern Europe.

Given the stakes involved, it is highly unlikely that Germany – despite its rhetorical commitment to 'Europe' and the CFSP – will allow its relations with the Eurasian great power to its east to be subordinated to an EU 'Common Strategy' decided on the basis of the lowest common denominator, and constrained by the fears and suspicions of those living in the shadow of the bear. Germany has a strong interest in pragmatic and interest-driven cooperation with Russia in the context of balanced multipolarity, and will constantly have to find new ways to balance its relations with Moscow, Kiev and *Mitteleuropa*. Navigating the shoals and reefs of Central and Eastern Europe's changed geopolitics will therefore prove a stern test for the diplomatic nous of the Berlin Republic.

Germany – still a 'problem'?

Central to the transition from bipolarity to balanced multipolarity in Europe has been the transformation of the semi-sovereign Bonn Republic into the self-assured and occasionally assertive Berlin Republic. Once again, Germany is Europe's *Zentralmacht*, bestriding the heartlands of the continent, and thinking – and more importantly acting – like the great power it is. No longer compelled by the constraints of bipolarity to mask its national interests behind the rhetoric of 'Europe', or to play second fiddle to Paris or Washington, reunified Germany is more openly seeking to shape its regional milieu and set the European – if not the international – agenda. Whilst seeking a place at the top table (in the form of a permanent seat on the UN Security Council), Germany increasingly views its multilateral commitments through the prism of its national interests, breaking

EU rules it has helped create if they constrain its freedom of action, and threatening to pursue a *Sonderweg* if it disagrees with the decisions of other great powers or international organisations. With the transition from the Bonn to the Berlin Republic, in other words, Germany has become a 'normal' great power, shedding its 'reflexive multilateralism' and the lingering vestiges of its former 'civilian power' identity.

Once again, therefore, Germany is the pivot and fulcrum of the European balance of power. Given its central geographic location and its economic size, Germany is the single most powerful country in Europe. Yet it is not a superpower or a potential hegemon, and its relative power capabilities do not threaten the stability of the European equilibrium in the way they did in the first half of the twentieth century. German reunification has not, in other words, created a structural situation of unbalanced multipolarity, with all the dangers and uncertainties that would involve.

Thus whilst Germany has resumed its former place amongst the ranks of Europe's great powers, this should not be the cause of undue concern. The Berlin Republic is a great power, but it is not a 'Fourth Reich'.[70] The spirit of Bismarck and Stresemann might once again be alive in the corridors of the *Auswärtiges Amt*, but that of Hitler is dead and buried in the rubble of his bunker. There is nothing unusually alarming, sinister or frightening about Germany's great power status. It is a 'normal' great power, like France, Russia or Britain – no better, and no worse. The 'German problem' was never a function of a putative German national character, but of its relative power capabilities and geopolitical location.[71] Germany will always be burdened by the legacy of the Third Reich, and becoming a 'normal' country does not mean relativising or forgetting the Holocaust and the uniquely barbaric crimes of the Nazi regime. There is certainly no excuse for Germans to become smug and complacent by assuming that they have sufficiently repented for the crimes of their forbears, and evolved a higher morality that justifies a German *Sonderweg*. But the German problem cannot be reduced to the character of the German people or the nature of Germany's domestic political order. It is much more about Germany's relative power capabilities. Understanding Germany's place and role in balanced multipolarity thus involves avoiding two pitfalls: exaggerating German power and the danger of a 'Fourth Reich' on the one hand; and on the other, imagining that Germany is a *Zivilmacht* embodying a more developed ethical sensibility than other major powers, and pretending that reunification has had no impact on the pattern of diplomatic and strategic interactions in Europe.

As Europe's *Zentralmacht* and the fulcrum of its balance of power, Germany is singularly placed to affect the shape and dynamics of Europe's post-Cold War international order. It is this that constitutes the new German question. As Renata Fritsch-Bournazel has argued,

> The German Question has always been the question of where in Europe the Germans belong: looking Westwards or wandering between East

> and West; recognising their geographically central position or breaking out of it? This was the vital question for domestic as well as foreign policy in Bismarck's day. Despite the discontinuities in German history in the last hundred years, the same questions were and are continually posed anew and require answers from responsible statesmen, always keeping in view the continually changing patterns in international relations.[72]

Reunification and the end of bipolarity have presented the Berlin Republic with four main grand strategic options: a *Kerneuropa* ('core Europe') option of shaping an 'EU Europe' with Paris; 'partners in leadership' with the American hyperpower; a new Rapallo with Russia; and a German *Mitteleuropa*. Each offers temptations and risks. If it were to choose to align itself ever more closely with France, it could give new dynamism and focus to the European integration process (at least, within an inner core), but at the cost of alienating itself from Washington and from more Eurosceptic and transatlanticist countries like Britain and Poland. On the other hand, it could accept the US offer to become 'partners in leadership', but at the risk of loosing influence in the EU, and alienating Russia and France. A new Rapallo offers some potential economic and strategic benefits, and would lessen German dependence on America and France. It would also give Germany greater opportunities for milieu-shaping in Central and Eastern Europe in cooperation with Moscow, but at the expense of alienating its Western allies. The *Mitteleuropa* option would give Germany new allies in Central and Eastern Europe, but would complicate relations with Russia and France.

In the context of balanced multipolarity, therefore, structural pressures will give the Berlin Republic strong incentives for continuing the policy of *sowohl als auch*, avoiding permanent and exclusive attachments to any of its great power allies and neighbours, and keeping all of its diplomatic balls in the air. In the context of the Cold War, the Bonn Republic's *Westbindung* meant that it constituted one corner of a strategic triangle alongside Washington and Paris. In the context of balanced multipolarity, the Berlin Republic finds itself at the centre of a pentagon comprising France, America, Britain, Russia and Poland. Looking to its west, it must find a *modus vivendi* between Paris and Washington, and accommodate the interests of the UK, which continues to cultivate a 'special relationship' with the United States whilst playing a more influential role in Europe as part of the 'EU3'. Looking eastwards, it must balance its strategic partnership with Russia with rapprochement with Poland and the countries of *Mitteleuropa*. Moreover, while the East–West dimension provides the main axis of German grand strategy, Berlin must also balance the interests of the prosperous Scandinavians (who, like Germany, are net contributors to the EU budget) with the expectations of the South, who see Germany as a bountiful *Milchkuh*. As in the past, therefore, Germany has a number of strategic options open to it, and consequently more diplomatic balls to juggle than most.

Germany's power and its *Mittellage* mean that, with skilful diplomacy, it could serve as Europe's *ehrlicker Makler*, acting as a mediator and conciliator between competing state interests in the context of balanced multipolarity. The danger, however, is that it succumbs to the temptation of a new *Schaukelpolitik* ('a policy of swing'), oscillating unpredictably between alternative grand strategies. While the Berlin Republic has demonstrated greater self-confidence and assuredness, freed from the constraints of bipolarity, it has not been immune from the temptations of power, and its foreign policy has been occasionally volatile and unpredictable. Schröder's alienation of Washington, London and Warsaw demonstrates the risks of domestic opportunism undermining a balanced foreign policy. While Chancellor Merkel's grand coalition promises to restore equilibrium to Germany's competing geopolitical interests, underlying tensions within the 'red–black' coalition mean that Europe's *Zentralmacht* might face weak and divided political leadership. This would not only add an element of unpredictability to its foreign policy, but would also prevent the government tackling two of the most urgent tasks facing Germany as a great power: restoring dynamism to its sclerotic and over-regulated economy,[73] and modernising the Bundeswehr.[74] Nonetheless, given its importance in the international political system, and its relative power capabilities, Germany remains an obvious candidate for permanent membership of the UN Security Council.

No longer either Europe's 'anvil' or 'hammer', reunified Germany nevertheless remains the single most powerful country in Europe, with the greatest potential to affect the pattern of diplomatic and strategic interactions in the continent. Europe's new age, it has been suggested, may well be 'a German age, perhaps to the degree that the age of Louis XIV was French, that the age of Victoria was British and that the twentieth century has been American'.[75] This overstates Germany's relative power capabilities in the context of balanced multipolarity. Germany is not powerful enough to dominate Europe, but its size and location means that it will have a disproportionate impact on the security order and institutional structures of a multipolar Europe. The most serious concern regarding Germany is not that it will become a recidivist 'Fourth Reich', but that its political leadership will fail to understand the structural pressures it faces as a situated actor. This could either mean succumbing to the 'arrogance of power' and acting 'like a selfish player concerned above all with relative gains and insensitive to the claims and fears of others',[76] or failing to rise to the responsibilities and demands that its great power status entails and adopting the escapist instincts of an oversized Switzerland. The Berlin Republic must therefore define a role for itself that neither shirks its great power responsibilities nor rekindles the fears of others. Given its role as Europe's *Zentralmacht*, how Germany responds to the conflicting pressures of balanced multipolarity will be one of the crucial factors affecting the prospects for peace and security in twenty-first century Europe.

8

RUSSIA, EASTERN EUROPE AND *MITTELEUROPA*

> I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma; but perhaps there is a key. That key is Russian national interest.
>
> Winston Churchill[1]

If Germany was the major winner from the end of Cold War bipolarity, Russia was the loser. The collapse of the Soviet system freed the Soviet peoples from communist dictatorship, but it left the Russian state greatly weakened as an international actor. The implosion of the USSR was the single most important event in the history of the European security system since 1945. It led to the unravelling of prevailing territorial and strategic relationships throughout Central and Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia, creating a new structural distribution of power throughout the strategic heartlands of Eurasia. Most importantly, it spelt the end of bipolarity on a global and European level, and led to the emergence of a new constellation of power relationships in the European security system.

This chapter examines the implications of the demise of bipolarity for Russian grand strategy, and the systemic pressures shaping the geopolitics of Central and Eastern Europe in the context of balanced multipolarity. It begins by examining two prevalent liberal-idealist illusions about Russia and Eastern Europe: the first is that a democratic Russia would be a peaceful and cooperative Russia no longer concerned about its great power status (*derzhavnost*); the second is that security competition and power politics in Central and Eastern Europe can be transcended through cooperative 'security governance' based on shared norms, values and institutions. Both are based on erroneous theoretical foundations, and overlook the competitive logic of self-help international systems.

The critique of these two illusions is followed by an examination of Russia's place in the post-Cold War European security system, and its response to the competing structural pressures of the international system – global unipolarity and regional balanced multipolarity. Whilst its decline in relative power

capabilities means that Russia is no longer a potential European hegemon, it remains a regional great power.[2] Like all great powers, it has an interest in both security and power maximisation. Whereas Russia has acted primarily as a 'defensive positionalist' in its relations with Europe, it has pursued a power maximisation strategy in its 'near abroad' (*blizhnee zarubezhe*).

This analysis of Russian grand strategy is followed by a brief examination of the geopolitics of the 'lands between' Russia and Germany, which have constituted an archetypal 'buffer' or 'crush' zone in the Westphalian states' system.[3] This geopolitical arena – the heartlands of which constitute a distinct political and cultural region known as *Mitteleuropa* – has long been a focus of either competition or cooperation between Russia and Germany. With the end of bipolarity, *Mitteleuropa* has once again become vulnerable to relations between its two flanking powers. Russia's declining influence on the region has allowed the East Central Europeans to 'return to Europe', thereby shifting the balance of power in favour of the West. As Russian power has ebbed away, Germany has rapidly re-emerged as the dominant economic force in the region. At the same time, the United States now plays a role in *Mitteleuropa* as an 'off-shore balancer'. Despite their 'return to Europe', therefore, Central and Eastern European states remain what they have historically been – buffer states living in the shadow of giants.

I LIBERAL ILLUSIONS

Regime type and Russian foreign policy

With the collapse of communist autocracy and the advent of democracy, liberals have argued, Russia's foreign and security policy would change fundamentally, and for the better. This belief is rooted deep in Western thinking about the causes and nature of the Cold War, and reflects liberal-idealist assumptions about the nature of international politics. It is based on the reductionist fallacy that domestic politics ('second-image' factors) determine foreign policy behaviour.[4] According to this perspective, the Cold War was the product of communist ideology and Marxism–Leninism's inherent drive for global domination. Consequently, a democratic Russia is destined to be a more cooperative and pacific partner for Western liberal democracies.

In fact, domestic regime type and ideology have never been able to account effectively for the broad patterns of Russian foreign policy. On the contrary, Russian grand strategy has been 'shaped and shoved' by structural pressures which have generated an instinctive drive for security and power maximisation.[5] At times of relative weakness, Russia has acted primarily as a 'defensive positionalist'; at times of growing strength, it has sought to maximise its power. It is these systemic imperatives which largely account for the broad patterns of Russian foreign and security policy, rather than domestic politics or the national attributes of the Russian 'soul'.

This is clearly evident from twentieth-century Russian history. The October Revolution led to a profound transformation of Russia's domestic political order and ideology. The first 'Commissar' for foreign policy, Leon Trotsky, initially declared that his ministry would simply issue a few decrees and then 'shut up shop'. Instead, it grew into one of the biggest and most power-orientated foreign ministries in the world. From early on, Soviet Russia conducted its foreign policy on the basis of *Realpolitik*, not Marxist–Leninist ideology. The Soviet Union agreed a trade pact with the UK in 1921, and the following year it signed the Rapallo treaty with Weimar Germany, which included a programme of secret military cooperation. In the 1930s, the USSR considered a series of balancing options with France and the UK against the rising power of Germany, before opting for a non-aggression pact with Nazi Germany in 1939. It finally joined the 'Grand Alliance' with Britain and the USA in June 1941. Soviet foreign policy in the inter-war years is inexplicable in terms of ideology or regime type, but is understandable in terms of the strategic dilemmas facing the USSR arising from the unstable balance of power. It is also striking that Russia, Britain, France and America ended up on the same side in both World Wars, despite major changes in the domestic politics of all these states in the inter-war period. This is only explicable in terms of the structural dynamics of the international system, which reductionist approaches ignore.

With the collapse of communist power and the transition to democracy, the broad patterns of Russian foreign policy continue to be shaped primarily by systemic pressures, rather than by the ebb and flow of domestic politics. Whatever its internal political complexion, Russia's relative power capabilities and its Eurasian geopolitical location give it a distinctive set of foreign and security policy concerns. As the US Defense Secretary William Perry admitted in March 1994, 'even with the best possible outcome imaginable in Russia, the new Russia will have interests different from ours'.[6]

'Security governance'

A second widespread liberal-idealist illusion is that great power competition in the East European 'buffer zone' can be mitigated, if not transcended, by 'security governance'. The concept of 'security governance' has been much in vogue over recent years, not least because it promises a way of short-circuiting the competitive logic of international politics.[7] It therefore chimes well with the dominant liberal *Zeitgeist*, drawing on and assimilating a range of liberal-idealist assumptions from the English School, social constructivism and liberal institutionalism – all of which share the optimistic illusion that, because of globalisation and the spread of democracy, liberal values and multilateral institutions, 'the world's grown honest'.[8]

Central to the security governance approach is the familiar liberal-idealist claim that 'Power in post-Cold War Europe is not . . . competitively wielded as was the case with Cold War bipolarity'.[9] This claim rests on five propositions.

First, that international anarchy has been replaced by a 'heterarchy of self-organisation';[10] second, that numerous non-state actors operate in the international system; third, that an intricate network of formal and informal institutions has developed; fourth, that norms and values structure international politics; and finally, that the manifold actors and institutions in the international system constitute a 'collectivity' engaged in purposeful activity to maintain 'collective order, the achievement of collective goods, and the collective processes of rule through which order and goals are sought'.[11] Governance thus defined as the 'coordinated management and regulation of issues by multiple and separate authorities', embracing 'formal and informal arrangements, in turn structured by discourse and norms, and purposefully directed towards particular policy outcomes'.[12]

The advocates of the 'security governance' approach make great explanatory claims on its behalf: not only does it challenge neo-realism's state-centrism, they argue, and 'locate some of the distinctive ways in which European security has been co-ordinated, managed and regulated', it also provides a theoretical framework 'that describes and elucidates some of the core features of the actuality of Europe's security relations'.[13] Unfortunately, it does none of these things: the concept is under-specified and rests on faulty theoretical logic. The central problem with the notion of security governance is that it takes a concept developed to elucidate aspects of policy implementation in domestic politics and applies it to a very different realm – international politics. Political power is exercised very differently in hierarchically-organised domestic political systems than in international political systems which lack a central government, and which are therefore anarchically ordered.

Because it fails to appreciate the distinction between domestic and international politics, the security governance approach overestimates the impact of non-state actors, institutions and norms on state behaviour. Realists do not deny that other international actors operate alongside states; nor do they deny the existence of international institutions and norms. What they do question is whether these exert any significant impact on the behaviour of great powers when the latters' vital interests are at stake. States are not the *only* international actors, but they are the major ones, and they set the scene in which non-state actors (such as charities, environmental organisations, human rights watchdogs, medical organisations, think-tanks and private companies) 'stage their dramas or carry out their humdrum affairs', as Waltz put it. States may not habitually interfere in the affairs of non-state actors, but they set the terms of their interaction, passively or actively. 'When the crunch comes, states remake the rules by which other actors operate.'[14]

As regards multilateral institutions, there is little evidence that these have effectively constrained Russia's behaviour when it perceives its vital national interests to be at stake – any more than they have Europe's other great powers. Nor is there any solid evidence that 'shared norms and values' can alter the competitive logic of international anarchy and constrain the behaviour of the

major actors in the system when issues of security and power maximisation are involved. Realists would make two points: first, that unless they are defined in bland and generalised terms, norms and values are highly contested in international politics.[15] Second, whilst realists would not dispute that the foreign policies of states are often influenced by second-order normative and ethical concerns, they would suggest that these rarely constrain the behaviour of great powers when issues of security or vital national interests are at stake.[16]

To conclude: realists accept that states under anarchy seek to cooperate to address shared problems, and that great powers usually take the lead in providing 'public goods' and developing forms of cooperative 'governance' on the basis of their enlightened self-interest.[17] Realists also accept that states pursue second-order normative concerns when vital interests are not at stake, and that great powers use multilateral institutions as vehicles for collective milieu-shaping. What realists dispute, however, is the empirical claim that power is 'no longer wielded competitively' in post-Cold War Europe, and the theoretical claim that the security governance approach 'elucidates some of the core features of the actuality of Europe's security relations'.

The pattern of international politics in Russia and Eastern Europe since the demise of bipolarity provides strong evidence that power continues to be wielded competitively in post-Cold War Europe, contrary to liberal-idealist claims that heterarchy, non-state actors, institutions, shared norms and common pursuits have led to the accommodation of interests and cooperative security governance.[18] Even in the context of balanced multipolarity, the competitive logic of international anarchy continues to generate elements of conflict and rivalry between the great powers. Although elements of cooperation and 'governance' have emerged, they reflect the prevailing constellation of relative power capabilities, not the autonomous effects of norms, institutions and non-state actors. In short, the European security system remains an anarchic, self-help realm, in which the balance of power – not security governance – provides the firmest foundations for peace and great power cooperation.

II RUSSIA AND THE SOVIET SUCCESSOR STATES

Russia and the end of the Cold War

The end of Cold War bipolarity came about because of the failure of Soviet state socialism and the break-up of the USSR. This had wide repercussions for the European security system and the international system more generally. As the Soviet imperium collapsed, Russia found itself back in its seventeenth-century borders, physically separated from Europe's heartlands by two belts of small and medium-sized states.[19] The first belt consisted of Soviet successor states, the second of ex-Warsaw Pact countries. The loss of Russia's 'internal' and 'external' empire had the dramatic effect of transforming the Moscow Military

District, which had served as the Soviet military's 'deep rear' during the Cold War, into a frontline district.[20] Similar changes transformed Russia's strategic environment in the Caucasus and Central Asia.

As its relative power capabilities rapidly shrunk, the Russian state faced an array of new strategic dilemmas. No longer a superpower with global pretensions, Russia was reduced to being – at best – a Eurasian great power.[21] On paper, it possessed substantial military capabilities, including a sizeable arsenal of strategic nuclear weapons, which promised to guarantee its great power status. But its apparent military strength could not disguise Russia's parlous condition in the early 1990s. Its economy went into free-fall as the central planning system disintegrated and trade within the former Soviet Union collapsed.[22] A corruption-ridden process of 'privatisation' occurred, but structural economic reforms to create a competitive market economy were slow in coming. Russia's population was reduced to 148 million, 20 per cent of whom were non-ethnic Russians. At the same time, 25 million Russians were left as minority communities in neighbouring states.[23] A rising crime wave was accompanied by the emergence of a home-grown *Mafiya*, and the social malaise affecting Russia was evident from adverse demographic trends, deepening poverty, declining public health, rampant alcoholism and a growing drugs problem.[24] Even Russia's armed forces were a pale shadow of the once-mighty Soviet army: equipment was largely out-dated, discipline was weak, morale low, bullying widespread and corruption endemic.[25] The poor state of the Russian army was exposed by the inept and brutal campaign waged against Chechen separatists in 1994.[26] Despite its claims to be the legal successor to the Soviet Union, therefore, Russia in the early 1990s appeared to be little more than a 'paper tiger'.

As Moscow struggled with the uncertainties of the end of bipolarity, it began defining a grand strategy that focused on two key gaols: broad-ranging cooperation with its former Cold War adversaries in Europe and North America in order to create a benign external environment for domestic economic transformation and political consolidation; and the re-establishment of Russian dominion in its 'near abroad'. Both goals were essential if Russia was to re-emerge as an influential actor in the post-Cold War world. Nonetheless, there was an inherent tension between the goal of cooperation with the West and asserting its interests in its near abroad.[27] The post-Soviet Russian elite therefore faced an ambiguous and contradictory set of exogenous structural pressures, which pointed in the direction of a grand strategy characterised by an uneasy mix of cooperation and competition. Russia needed European cooperation and was too weak to openly challenge American primacy. Yet the systemic imperatives of security and power maximisation in its near abroad led Moscow to resist Western encroachments on its former spheres of interest in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

In the early 1990s, the Yeltsin government was dominated by 'liberal westernizers' who sought to align Russia unconditionally with the Western-led international order.[28] Andrei Kozyrev, Russia's first foreign minister, was the most prominent liberal westernizer. His primary foreign policy objective was to

embed Russia firmly in Euro-Atlantic institutions and to have it accepted as an equal partner by Western states. The Yeltsin government also sought to play on Western fears of a 'Weimar syndrome' in Russia in order to secure much-needed economic aid and financial support from the IMF.[29] In its weakened state, therefore, Russia initially proved a pliant and accommodating partner for the West, functioning primarily as a security-maximising 'defensive positionalist' concerned with preserving its former great power status.

Once Russia began recovering from the psychological shock of its precipitous decline, however, and as the structural imperatives of the self-help international system manifested themselves more clearly, Moscow proved a much less accommodating partner. As it became evident that Western powers were not going to be as generous with economic assistance as many Russians had initially hoped, or allow it to participate fully as an equal partner in shaping the new international order, the Russian government began to assert its national interests with greater determination.[30] From 1993 onwards, as Russia adjusted to the structural imperatives of the post-Cold War world, it evolved a new grand strategy based on a pragmatic great power nationalism. This was accompanied by a formal rehabilitation of the 'geopolitical approach', along with the adoption of the term *natsional'naia bezopasnost* ('national security') and a debate on the relationship between 'national interests' (*national'nyi interes*) and 'state interests' (*gosudarstvennyi interes*) – all of which signified a clear break with the ideological lexicon of Soviet Marxism–Leninism and the *naivete* of the 'liberal westernizers'.[31]

This new approach to foreign policy led to a major reorganisation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at the end of 1993, refocusing its emphasis away from cooperation with the West and towards Russian interests in the 'near abroad'.[32] Russia's more assertive approach to international politics was first felt in the Balkans, where it began to launch its own diplomatic initiatives, and sought to use the UN to constrain unilateral military intervention by NATO.[33] The most important challenge to Russia's national security interests, however, was the issue of NATO enlargement, which demonstrated to Moscow that, for all the rhetoric of partnership and cooperation coming from the West, power was still being wielded competitively in the new Europe. From 1993 onwards, therefore, Russian foreign policy acquired a distinctly harder edge, culminating in Russia's reversal of its decision to join the Partnership for Peace scheme with NATO and Yeltsin's warning at the Budapest OSCE summit in December 1994 that Europe was facing a 'cold peace'.[34]

Russia and its 'near abroad'

As the threat of a 'cold peace' chilled relations between Russia and the West, Moscow turned its attention towards its 'near abroad' (*blizhnee zarubezhe*).[35] The disintegration of the Soviet Union created a new geostrategic environment around Russia's western and southern borders, composed of a plurality of small

and medium-sized states, many of which were dirt poor and wracked by ethno-national conflicts. Political and strategic relations throughout the post-soviet space were fluid, unpredictable and unstable.[36] This presented Russia's new political elite with four challenges: asserting Moscow's dominion over the 'buffer states' around its borders; reintegrating the Soviet successor states into the rouble zone and gaining control of key energy resources; protecting the rights of the Russian minorities; and minimising the security threats emanating from the 'near abroad', which included Islamic terrorism, transnational crime, arms smuggling, narcotics and illegal immigration.[37]

From the start, Moscow regarded its post-Soviet neighbourhood as its 'near abroad' – implying that relations with this area were something less than foreign policy. Russia's overriding objective was to re-establish its dominion over the Soviet successor states, a goal which appeared feasible given their weak condition. In terms of relative power capabilities, Russia was clearly the dominant actor in the post-Soviet space. To re-establish its influence, Russia drew on a mix of policy instruments: its military power provided an obvious instrument of coercion, although outright Russian military intervention only occurred in Moldova, Georgia and Tajikistan.[38] Russian troops also withdrew peacefully from the three Baltic States.[39] Nonetheless, Russia's preponderant military power and network of military bases throughout the post-Soviet space gave it a latent source of coercive influence. Of equal importance was Russia's ability to manipulate economic dependencies with the Soviet successor states, particularly given its control of key energy resources and pipelines. Moscow also used the related issues of Russian minorities and border disputes as leverage – notably in Ukraine, Moldova and Kazakhstan, and, with lesser success, in Estonia and Latvia.

Central Asia and the Caucasus

As Russia struggled to define a 'Monroe doctrine' for its near abroad, it faced complex patterns of accommodation and resistance. The three Baltic states were unambiguously hostile to any form of security cooperation with Russia, and strove to align themselves with their Scandinavian and Central European neighbours.[40] They wanted as little to do with Russia as possible, and set their sights on joining NATO and the EU. Most other Soviet successor states, however, lacked powerful Western backers, and, to a greater or lesser extent, were forced to accommodate themselves to Russian influence. This was especially so with the Central Asian states, with the partial exception of Uzbekistan. Given its size and relative stability, along with its geographical separation from the Russian Federation, Uzbekistan sought to distance itself from Moscow throughout the 1990s – particularly as it had regional ambitions of its own.[41] Kazakhstan, on the other hand, has emerged as Russia's primary strategic partner in Central Asia, given its geographical proximity to Russia, the presence of a substantial Russian minority and its lack of other foreign policy options.[42]

In the conflict-torn Caucasus, Russian influence was much more fragile and contested. Georgia and Azerbaijan both sought to keep their distance from Russia, but came under strong pressure to accommodate Moscow's interests. Many Georgians were instinctively pro-American and pro-Turkish. Russia attempted to coerce Georgia to pursue a more amenable foreign policy by providing support for the break-away provinces of Abkhzia and South Ossetia, along with the self-styled 'Autonomous Republic of Adzharia'. Following the 'Rose revolution' of November 2003, the United States moved swiftly to offer military, economic and political aid for Tbilisi, increasing Georgia's room for foreign policy manoeuvre.[43] America and Russia have subsequently competed for influence in Georgia, despite their shared concern about terrorist bases in the Pankisi Gorge. The three Baltic States have also been actively supporting Georgia, using the rubric of a Baltic–Black Sea alliance.

The other two Caucasian states, Armenia and Azerbaijan, fought a bitter war in 1993 over Nagorno-Karabakh, which remains one of the region's 'frozen conflicts'. Given its historically-ingrained hatred of Turkey, Armenia was initially the most favourably disposed towards Russia of the three Caucasian states. Azerbaijan, on the other hand, enjoyed historically good relations with Turkey and Iran. However, it was wary of courting Moscow's displeasure, and consequently pursued a cautious foreign policy throughout the 1990s designed to balance the competing interests of its neighbours. Recently, however, Azerbaijan has responded to America's post-9/11 engagement in the Caucasus by pursuing an openly pro-US foreign policy. Azerbaijan sent troops to Afghanistan and Iraq, granted over-flight rights to the US military and has cooperated with a Pentagon-sponsored modernisation of a former Soviet airfield that could be used by American military planes. Azerbaijan has also supported US proposals to build pipelines that bypass both Russia and Iran. In return, President Ilham Aliyev was invited to the White House in April 2006.

CIS and GUUAM

Alongside overt military or economic pressure, Russia has sought to institutionalise its influence over the near abroad by creating the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).[44] This organisation, however, has no real institutional structure and lacks effective multilateral mechanisms. From the start, it has functioned as a limited means of policy coordination under Moscow's guidance.[45] Bilateral agreements, which have provided Moscow with a network of military bases and joint control of external borders, have proven the most effective means of Russian influence in CIS states. Russia's influence has been pervasive, but it is not based on direct control through hierarchical structures. As an authoritative Moscow-based think-tank noted in 1994, it has been manifested in 'leadership rather than control, economic dominance rather than political responsibility'.[46]

Since the early 1990s, therefore, Russia has struggled to assert its interests in

its near abroad with mixed success. The CIS lacks any real substance, and Russia has had to operate within a pluralist geopolitical space – one subject, moreover, to growing intervention by outside forces. The United States, China and Turkey have all been increasingly active in Central Asia and the Caucasus, courting allies and seeking to influence decisions on energy and pipelines – giving rise to talk of a new 'great game'.[47] The United States has increasingly sought to foster geopolitical pluralism in a region increasingly important both because of its energy resources and because of its location on the frontline of the 'war on terror'.[48] At the same time, China's insatiable thirst for energy and its fear of Islamic separatists in Xinjiang province have led it to play an increasingly active role in its Central Asian backyard. The geostrategic complexities of the new 'great game' mean that America is at once Russia's rival for geopolitical influence, its partner in counter-terrorism, and a potential ally against a rising China. Since the summer of 2002, Russia has thus engaged in low-level security competition with America over military bases, pipelines and political influence in Central Asia and the Caucasus, whilst cooperating with it in counter-terrorism.[49]

Moreover, in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus, Russia now faces competition from the EU, which has designated six states in Russia's 'near abroad' as its 'new neighbours'. The three Caucasian republics (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia) have been included in the EU's new policy initiative, along with Belarus, Moldova and Ukraine in Eastern Europe.[50] Russia's attempt to achieve political leadership and economic dominance over its 'near abroad' has thus been increasingly contested.

One indication of this is the formation in 1997 of GUAM (Georgia, Ukraine, Armenia and Moldova) as an alternative to the CIS. GUAM became GUUAM in 1999 when Uzbekistan joined, although it suspended its membership in 2002.[51] GUUAM has never functioned as a means of 'hard balancing' against Russian power. At best, it constitutes a form of 'soft balancing', signalling a political intent to resist Russian hegemony and explore other foreign policy options.[52] Since 2002, the United States has sought to resuscitate GUUAM and give it greater coherence and vigour. America has also cultivated new allies in Central Asia and the Caucasus, despite their often poor human rights record. This reflects the security imperatives of an American grand strategy based on competitive power maximisation, designed to prevent Russia's re-emergence as a Eurasian hegemon. Once again, the reality of international politics in the post-Soviet space is security competition, not cooperative security governance.

In Eastern Europe, only Belarus is solidly pro-Russian. An authoritarian state dominated by the unsavoury autocrat Alyaksandr Lukashenka, Belarus is a pariah state for the EU, and an awkward ally for Russia.[53] Since 1996, Russia and Belarus have embarked on a path towards creating a union of states, but progress towards this elusive goal remains slow – not least because Putin is wary of Lukashenka's political ambitions, and because Moscow has no desire to shoulder the financial burdens that such a union would entail. Nonetheless,

military–strategic relations between them are highly developed: Belarus is Russia's closest military ally, and provides it with a degree of strategic depth. More importantly, economic relations between them are close, Belarus being Russia's second-largest trading partner after Germany.[54] Despite clashes over energy, Belarus remains an important ally for Russia in Eastern Europe.

Moldova is an odd case in many respects. One of the poorest and most corrupt states in Europe, it faces acute socio-economic and political problems, and seems to survive on a potentially lethal cocktail of arms smuggling, extensive black market activities and illegal trade. As a failing state and a hotbed of human trafficking and transnational crime, it is a source of concern to Russia and EU member states. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, Russia used its Fourteenth Army to support the break-away republic of Transnistria, partly in order to prevent Moldova reuniting with Romania, from which it had been annexed at the end of the Second World War. However, Moldova has become more of a liability than an asset for Moscow, and is one case where shared interests in milieu-shaping might lead to Russian cooperation with the EU in multilateral conflict resolution.[55]

Ukraine

Russia's major concern in its 'near abroad' has always been Ukraine. With a population of 51,707,000, rich agricultural land, significant industrial potential and a substantial military inherited from the Soviet Union, the emergence of an independent and sovereign Ukraine on 24 August 1991 has been described as 'the most significant geostrategic development in Europe since the end of the Second World War'.[56] Due to the quirks of Cold War diplomacy, Ukraine enjoyed a quasi-international status before the disintegration of the USSR, being a member of the UN and its affiliated and associated international organisations. Hence its independence could be built on an already existing international juridical base.[57] Nonetheless, most Russians regarded Kiev, the capital of Ukraine, as 'the mother of Russian cities, the oldest city of ancient Rus', and regarded the 'loss' of Ukraine as an unnatural – and perhaps temporary – separation. Ukraine was also seen as a natural component of any future 'slavic union' (along with Belarus and Kazakhstan), the creation of which would allow Russia to re-emerge as a new pole in a multipolar world.

Russian unease was heightened by suggestions that Ukraine could serve as the lynchpin of a *cordon sanitaire* stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea, thereby insulating Europe from Russia. Such ideas had been widely discussed by dissidents in East Central Europe in the late 1980s, and were floated in various forms following the disbanding of the Warsaw Pact.[58] Belarussian President Stanislau Shushkevich proposed a 'belt of neutral states' in April 1993, and the following month, Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk published a document entitled *Strengthening Regional Stability and Security in Central-Eastern Europe*. It proposed the creation of belt of states with mutual security guarantees

encompassing the Baltic states, Belarus, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania and Austria.[59] The proposal was studiously ignored by the East Central Europeans, who by this time were focused on gaining membership of NATO.[60] For Russia, however, such plans were a source of major apprehension.

Throughout much of the 1990s, Russia was locked into a series of disputes with Ukraine. A hardy perennial was the Russian minority, which was concentrated in the east and south of the country along the borders with the Russian Federation: this issue was particularly acute in Crimea, which Khrushchev had given to Ukraine as a anniversary present in 1954, despite being 70 per cent ethnically Russian. Crimea was important because it provided the home ports for the Black Sea fleet, the future of which constituted a primary bone of contention in Russo-Ukrainian relations. A further issue was trade and economic relations: throughout the 1990s, Russia provided Ukraine with subsidised energy, which provided Moscow with a potential source of political leverage. Russia's central objective throughout was to keep Ukraine within the Russian sphere of influence, and to prevent it from joining NATO and/or the EU (given the implications of Schengen controls for cross-border trade). Ukraine has thus had to pursue a careful balancing act: on the one hand, fostering closer economic and security ties with Euro-Atlantic institutions and the Western powers, and on the other, preserving cordial relations with its powerful Slavic neighbour.[61]

Relations improved in 1997 after the resolution of a series of outstanding disputes. The Russian Duma finally ratified the Friendship Treaty with Ukraine, which acknowledged the legitimacy of existing territorial boundaries and ended Russian claims to Crimea. The ratification of the three Sevastopol agreements also resolved the issue of the Black Sea Fleet and opened the way for closer military collaboration.[62] The improvement in Russo-Ukrainian relations reflected Kiev's belief that the EU was not going to offer it sufficient economic assistance to supplant its dependence on Russia.[63]

Nonetheless, Russia remains acutely worried that Ukraine might someday join not only the EU, but also NATO – bringing US power and influence into Moscow's frontyard.[64] It has therefore continued to put pressure on Ukraine to prevent it from succumbing to US and European overtures. This has primarily taken the form of economic pressure over gas and oil supplies, which were halted briefly in December 2000, and again more dramatically in the winter of 2005–06.[65] The conflicting systemic pressures on Ukraine led to the flare-up of intense security competition between Russia and the West in the autumn of 2004. This was occasioned by the Ukrainian Presidential election that culminated in the 'orange revolution', during which Russia and the West backed rival candidates.[66] Ukraine, whose name means 'borderland', thus finds itself 'suspended at the edge of two worlds, the West and Russia', serving as lightning-pole for security competition between a resurgent Moscow and a power-maximising West.[67]

III VLADIMIR PUTIN AND RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY

NATO enlargement and the Kosovo War

For the Western powers, the 1990s were a good decade. Although dreams of a post-modern Kantian pacific union were not realised, the West emerged as the undisputed champion of the East–West conflict. Germany reunified, and together with its Western partners, engaged in an ambitious process of collective milieu-shaping in the post-communist East – employing the carrots and sticks created by the long and drawn-out process of EU enlargement. NATO also enlarged, consolidating American influence in post-Cold War Europe, and acquiring new purpose as the primary vehicle for coalitional coercive diplomacy in the Balkans. At the close of the decade, 'Operation Allied Force' in Kosovo seemed to herald the dawn of a new liberal era, in which Westphalian principles of state sovereignty would be superseded by a new doctrine of international community and humanitarian intervention.

For liberal-idealists, these developments were part and parcel of the creation of a Europe 'whole and free' and the transcendence of the balance of power by cooperative security governance. This, however, was not the view from Moscow. For the Russian *siloviki* (the 'men of power'), the 1990s were a period of disappointment, humiliating set-backs and decline. Russia had been included in the Contact Group and the G7, and had signed the Founding Act with NATO and a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) with the EU. Nevertheless, the stark reality was that Russia had limited influence on the shaping of the new Europe and on the US-led 'new world order'. Once an asset, Yeltsin's leadership increasingly became an embarrassing liability. Russia's slow economic recovery was knocked back by the crash of August 1998, whilst the problems of corruption, terrorism, the Chechen War and political instability seemed intractable. At the heart of Russia's foreign and security policy failures, it was recognised, were its domestic problems – political, economic and social. Unless these underlying problems could be resolved, it was clear that Russia would be unable to generate the resources necessary to give substance to its great power aspirations.

Amidst the pervasive gloom and doom of the 1990s, two events stood out – NATO enlargement, and the Kosovo War of 1999. Both developments highlighted Russia's weakness and signalled a sharp deterioration in its external environment. They were also closely intertwined in Russian minds, confirming suspicions that the United States was using NATO to impose a unipolar order on the international system that would further marginalise Russian influence. NATO enlargement was also perceived as a clear manifestation of US-led power maximisation at Russia's expense, violating an implicit understanding reached during the 'two plus four' negotiations that NATO would not expand eastwards.

The Kosovo War, which followed shortly after NATO formally enlarged, was even more disturbing. No longer content with providing Article V collective defence guarantees for its members, NATO appeared to have transformed itself

into a means of unilaterally reshaping the international order, by-passing the United Nations, and undermining the hitherto accepted canons of international law. In his speech to the Duma on 27 March 1999, Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov noted that 'having only just acquired three new members, NATO has immediately demonstrated its aggressive nature'. The following July, he concluded that by creating new patterns of division and confrontation in Europe, Operation Allied Force posed a 'major conceptual challenge' to Russian foreign policy. The Kosovo War, President Yeltsin declared, violated both the UN Charter and the Founding Act; 'in effect what we have here is an attempt by NATO to enter the 21st century in the uniform of world policeman. Russia will never agree to this.'[68]

The unpalatable truth, however, was that whether or not Russia agreed to this, there was little it could do to prevent it. Despite the Founding Act and the establishment of the Joint Permanent Council (JPC), Moscow had no real influence on Alliance decision-making.[69] Russia was unable to prevent NATO's intervention in Kosovo because it lacked allies or credible military options, and because it was in the humiliating position of being a supplicant for IMF loans at the time. Russia broke off all military cooperation within the framework of the Founding Act, withdrew from the Partnership for Peace programme, refused to comply with NATO's oil embargo on Belgrade and deployed an intelligence vessel (the *Liman*) from Sevastopol to the Adriatic. Beyond that, however, its options were limited. In the end, President Yeltsin appointed Viktor Chernomyrdin as his special envoy; he worked alongside the Finnish President Marti Ahtisaari and US Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott to broker a political solution to the conflict.[70] The last act in this sorry tale was the hasty deployment of Russian airborne troops to Kosovo to seize control of Pristina airport on 11 June 1999 – despite the risk of conflict with advancing NATO forces.[71]

NATO enlargement and the Kosovo War were critical in crystallising Russian thinking about the post-Cold War international system. Together, they sounded the death-knell of Russian liberal internationalism, and served to consolidate a pragmatic nationalist grand strategy that included a new Military Doctrine and a new National Security concept. One year later, Vladimir Putin's accession to power as president led to a recalibration of Russian foreign policy designed to reverse the decade of decline and humiliation and re-establish Russia as a great power.[72] The strategy had four dimensions: an emphasis on domestic recovery rather than adventures abroad; close economic and political cooperation with Europe; pragmatic interest-driven cooperation with the United States; and the consolidation of Russian dominion in the 'near abroad'. Cooperation with the West was essential if Russia was to address its domestic economic and political problems, which remained the underlying cause of Russia's international weakness. At the same time, however, President Putin sought to maximise Moscow's leverage over its neighbours, and to profile Russia as a sovereign great power with its own foreign policy agenda. The result was a complex 'multi-vectored' foreign policy that involved a mix of cooperation and

rivalry with Western powers. In essence, Russia acted as a security maximising 'defensive positionalist' for much of the time in its relations with the United States and the European powers, whilst seeking to exploit opportunities for power maximisation when favourable situations presented themselves – particularly in the near abroad.

Russia and the unipolar world

A central theme running through Russian foreign policy discourse since the end of the Cold War has been its preference for a multipolar global system.[73] Moscow's discomfort with US unipolarity was exacerbated by NATO enlargement and the Kosovo War. Throughout the 1990s, Russia cultivated bilateral partnerships with China and India, and during his visit to New Delhi in December 1998, Foreign Minister Primakov floated the idea of a new 'strategic triangle' uniting the three of them against American unipolarity.[74] The emphasis on multipolarity was bound up with Russia's rhetorical commitment to international law and the United Nations, which American capriciousness and NATO's unilateral military intervention seemed to threaten.

Despite the rhetorical commitment to multipolarity, however, no new strategic triangle emerged in the 1990s, and Russia's strategic partnerships with China and India never acquired much substance. Like Yeltsin before him, President Putin took great pains to avoid directly challenging or unduly antagonising the United States, and the idea of 'multipolarity' was quietly dropped from the preamble of the new military doctrine approved in April 2000.[75] Instead, Putin moved swiftly to accommodate American strategic concerns by finally ratifying START II and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, and by muting Russia's criticism of America's unilateral abrogation of the ABM Treaty.

The reasons why Russia sought to accommodate US strategic concerns and avoided building a countervailing global balance to American unipolarity were twofold. First, both Yeltsin and Putin recognised that the notion of Russia as one pole in a multipolar world risked leaving it in a strategic no-man's-land, with no firm allies and little influence on world affairs. Russia, they both recognised, could not afford a confrontational relationship with the unipolar hyperpower, particularly given more pressing regional security concerns in Central and Eastern Asia.

Second, like all great powers, Russia is primarily concerned with security issues in its immediate environs, rather than with the global or 'universal' balance of power. The complicating factor here is that Russia overlaps three distinct regional security systems: one in Europe, one in Central Asia and the Caspian Sea region, and one in East Asia. The most serious external threats to the Russian Federation come not from Europe, but from Central Asia and the Caspian Sea region. Here, Russia faces common security threats from Islamic terrorism and regional instability, and consequently has some interest in cooperative milieu-shaping with the USA. However, it is increasingly uncomfort-

able with America's post 9/11 assertiveness in the region. At the same time, Russia is worried about the rise of China, which is seen as presenting a long-term security challenge in both Central and Eastern Asia.[76] In East Asia, both America and Japan are potential partners against a rising China. Thus whilst Moscow continues to cultivate good relations with Beijing, and has held its first-ever joint military exercises with China, their 'strategic partnership' lacks depth and substance given Moscow's concerns about the future intentions of a potentially hegemonic China. Russia's complex and variegated set of strategic interests in the three regional security systems which it overlaps therefore work against the formation of global counter-balancing coalition aimed at challenging US unipolarity. Instead, Russia has sought to cultivate friendly relationships with all major powers in the international system, whilst mortgaging its future to none.

The terrorist attacks of 9/11 presented Putin with the perfect opportunity to re-cast relations with Washington around a shared interest in fighting Islamic terrorism.[77] Putin portrayed the Chechen War as a key front in a global 'war on terror' which extended from North Africa, across the Balkans and the Greater Middle East, to Southeast Asia. He also presented the October 2002 theatre hostage siege in Moscow as Russia's 9/11, and offered unconditional support for America in its struggle against Al Qaeda. Putin made a virtue of necessity by providing whole-hearted support for 'Operation Enduring Freedom' in Afghanistan. This involved sharing intelligence with the Americans and British, facilitating the establishment of US military bases in Central Asia, opening up air corridors and providing substantial military hardware to the Northern Alliance. In return, Putin hoped for muted US criticism of the Chechen War and support for Russian entry into the WTO. Russia thus based its relationship with Washington almost exclusively on shared security concerns, focused on terrorism and proliferation.[78]

Nonetheless, the relationship has been complicated, exhibiting elements of both cooperation and rivalry. Russia has responded to US unipolarity with a multi-pronged policy. Despite a lingering rhetorical commitment to multipolarity and occasional talk of a 'new strategic triangle', Russia's complex and variegated set of strategic interests in Europe and Asia work against the formation of a global counter-balancing coalition aimed at challenging US unipolarity. Russia has recognised that it cannot afford to alienate the most powerful state in the international system, not least because it faces a long-term security threat from a rising China.

Russia and European multipolarity

Whilst Russia's relations with America are based on a narrow range of shared strategic concerns, its relations with Europe are grounded in a belief that it has a specific 'European calling' or destiny (*prizvanie*). This is not simply a question of a socially constructed Russian identity, but reflects very real material

interests: the bulk of Russia's population and its economic infrastructure are located west of the Urals, geographically in Europe.[79] The EU is also Russia's main trading partner. Russia's future economic prospects are therefore intimately bound up with its relationship with its European neighbours.

With the transition from bipolarity to balanced multipolarity in Europe, Russia faces new challenges and opportunities. Russia's primary challenge has been to prevent its marginalisation from European affairs, both in terms of its ability to shape Europe's post-Cold War security architecture, and its access to EU markets. The opportunities arise from the loosening of transatlantic ties and the consequent fluidity in diplomatic relations between Europe's major powers, which have enabled Moscow to cultivate new strategic partnerships from amongst them.[80] During the Cold War, the Soviet Union pursued a 'wedge-driving' policy designed to weaken American influence in Europe. With the end of the Cold War, however, the systemic incentives for this policy have weakened, and Moscow shows little desire to choose between Washington and its European allies. Russia would certainly like to see a weakening of NATO's role in the European security system, given its perception of the alliance as a conduit for American power maximisation in Central and Eastern Europe. Nonetheless, Moscow shows no inclination of wanting to construct an anti-American coalition aimed at excluding the United States from playing a role in Europe's balanced multipolarity.[81]

In the context of balanced multipolarity, Germany has pride of place in Moscow's *Europapolitik*. For Moscow, the road to Brussels and Europe lies through Berlin, literally as well as figuratively. As we have seen, Russo-German relations have steadily deepened and thickened since the late 1990s, based on common economic, political and strategic interests. Under Yeltsin, Russia's key European allies were Germany and, to a lesser extent, France. Putin has significantly upgraded Moscow's relations with the UK, smoothed over the disputes with France over Chechnya, and cultivated closer ties with Italy. These bilateral relations are not based on shared norms and values, but on a recognition that Russia is a European power whose cooperation is vital in solving international problems such as the future of the Balkans, Iranian proliferation, Islamic terrorism and the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

Russia and multilateral institutions

In its relations with European states, the Russians have emphasised a common interest in preserving the United Nations and international law. In this respect, Russia is very much a *status quo* power – or rather, a *status quo ante* power, keen to restore the legal principles which underpinned the Westphalian states' system prior to Kosovo. Russia's emphasis on the UN and international law are also a means of signalling to its European partners a shared unhappiness with US unilateralism and a unipolar world order.[82] Russia's approach to multilateralism, however, reflects its interests as a great power, and accords with the

deductive expectations of realist theory. Russia has sought to emphasise the role of institutions only if they give it leverage over other states, and to weaken them if they constrain its behaviour. In the course of the 1990s, for example, Russia sought to strengthen the authority of the OSCE as a means of curbing NATO's freedom of manoeuvre. At the same time, Moscow resisted calls for a UN or OSCE mandate for Russian peacekeeping operations in the CIS.[83] More recently, however, Russia has sought to limit the role of the OSCE given what Moscow regards as the organisation's narrow focus on human rights and humanitarian intervention, and its limited geographical focus on the Balkans and Russia's 'near abroad'. Russia has made similar criticisms of the Council of Europe, although it took over the chairmanship of the organisation in 2006 and remains its biggest financial contributor.[84]

NATO–Russian relations continue to be characterised by an ambiguous and unresolved 'deterrence-cooperation' dichotomy.[85] Moscow has sought a privileged relationship through the NATO–Russian Council (NRC), created in May 2002 as a replacement for the Joint Permanent Council (JPC). This underlines its distinctive great power status, and provides a means for Russia to cooperate with NATO countries on nine specific issues including counter-terrorism, proliferation and joint peacekeeping.

Russia's relations with the EU are more complex and ambiguous. The EU is recognised to be an important multilateral interlocutor that holds the key to EU markets. EU–Russian relations are based on the June 1994 Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), which entered into force in 1997, and which includes provision for regular six-monthly summit meetings. The EU's *Common Strategy on Russia* agreed in June 1999 was the first of its kind, but was the typical product of the EU's lowest possible common denominator approach to foreign policy, and thus was devoid of real substance. Moscow responded with its *Medium Term Strategy for the Development of Relations Between the Russian Federation and the EU, 2000–2010*, which emphasised Russia's national interests, its sovereignty and its great power status with special interests in the CIS area. The very different tone of the two documents highlighted the structural problem of dialogue between a traditional great power and a disjointed collectivity articulating the varied interests of its disparate member states.

Moscow has been cautiously supportive of the ESDP, which potentially weakens NATO and may offer opportunities for cooperative milieu-shaping and crisis management.[86] As noted above, there are some indications that Russia would be willing to work with the EU in finding a solution to the thorny problem of Moldova and Transnistria. But Russia is generally wary of the EU's involvement in the near abroad (through the latter's 'new neighbourhood' initiative) and is irritated by EU moralising over Chechnya. The EU's Common Strategy on Russia is strong on declaratory principles but weak on specifics. As the institutional repository of its member states' second order normative concerns, the EU seeks to bring democratic enlightenment to Russia, but promises little in return, and has few effective mechanisms for leverage. Russia, on the

other hand, wants access to EU markets and some scope for shaping EU decision-making, but is unwilling to accept any constraints on its sovereignty and independence. Not surprisingly, therefore, Russia continues to place considerable emphasis on cultivating close bilateral partnerships with key European allies (above all Germany) rather than trying to deal with the hydra-headed EU.[87] Russia is particularly wary of a multilateral EU *Ostpolitik* which would be shaped by Poland and the three Baltic states. Russian–EU relations have thus reached an impasse: Russia seems locked into an 'adversarial partnership' with the EU, as it responds with a mixture of pragmatism and prickliness to the challenges of a multipolar Europe.[88]

Russian power in the twenty-first century

Russia's July 2000 Foreign Policy Concept stated that 'the Russian Federation conducts an independent and constructive foreign policy ... based on consistency, predictability and mutually beneficial pragmatism'. Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov noted that what was 'new' in this concept was 'realism in defining the international situation' and 'a healthy pragmatism in defending Russia's security'.[89] Since 2000, both these attributes have been apparent in Russian foreign and security policy. Russia has continued with its broad strategic orientation of cooperation with the United States and the European great powers, whilst defining a distinctive foreign policy that articulates Russia's perceived national interests.

Over recent years, Russian foreign policy has exhibited growing self-confidence and a new assertiveness. There are two reasons for this, one economic, the other political. Economically, the Russian economy has recovered from the 1998 crisis, and has benefited from a 50 per cent increase in oil production and rising prices for hydrocarbon fuels on world markets. This has substantially improved its foreign exchange earnings, allowing it to pay off much of its $40 billion foreign debt with the Paris Club of Western creditor nations whilst increasing defence expenditure.[90] According to the OECD, the Russian economy grew by 10 per cent in 2000, and since then has averaged annual growth of 6 per cent. Inflation has fallen from 84 per cent in 1998 to 12 per cent in 2004, whilst unemployment has fallen to 8 per cent – below the EU average of 9 per cent. It enjoys fiscal and trade surpluses of 3.7 per cent and 8.5 per cent of GDP respectively.[91] Russia today is an archetypal middle-income transitional society.[92] Politically, President Putin has provided effective and pragmatic leadership, which has also improved Russia's international standing. Moscow's greater self-confidence has been manifested in a more assertive foreign policy: Russia has demonstrated an independent line in the Middle East by inviting Hamas leaders to Moscow; it has launched its own diplomatic initiatives towards Iran, following the impasse in the EU3 negotiations with Tehran; it has played a constructive role in debates over a future settlement in Kosovo; and remains engaged in the North Korean imbroglio.

Russia's new assertiveness is particularly apparent from its use of energy as leverage in its relations with its European and Central Asian neighbours.[93] Its threat to cut off gas supplies to Ukraine in the winter of 2005, thereby threatening transit routes to EU markets, generated considerable concern in Europe. Gazprom has also put pressure on Belarus and Moldova by threatening to cut off supplies if they do not give it a controlling stake in the transit pipelines. Russia's aim has been to consolidate its monopoly over oil and gas pipelines throughout the region. Deals have been made with both Ukraine and Belarus to give Russia control of transit pipelines in return for subsidised energy. As Celeste Wallander notes, while 'Russia usually dangles oily carrots rather than brandishing pipeline sticks, . . . the dispute with Ukraine has illustrated the danger that Russia's emergence as a global energy power may itself create new vulnerabilities through dependence on a country willing to use its energy power for political coercion'.[94]

Russia's relationship with the US and with the European great powers can thus be summed up as 'pragmatic but prickly'. Russia cooperates with Western states on a broad range of issues, but also competes for power, status and influence. The days of a supine, accommodating Russia are over. Moscow, it seems, favours situations of 'controlled tension', i.e. diplomatic situations short of conflict, such as the prelude to the Iraq War or tension over Iran's nuclear programme. In such situations Russia, as a member of great power consortia like the UN Security Council, the Contact Group or the G8, can play a role in international crisis management, thereby raising its international profile and reinforcing its claims to great power status.[95] The problem with this opportunistic and multi-vectored foreign policy, however, is that it is inherently risky: Russia cannot continue indefinitely being all things to all people, and alternating cooperation, 'controlled tension' and security competition. 'Putin's room for manoeuvre is contracting', Bobo Lo notes, and at some stage Russia might be compelled to make some hard choices, ending the studied ambiguity that has characterised Russia's grand strategy in the post-Cold War era.[96]

IV MITTELEUROPA AND THE 'LANDS BETWEEN'

Beyond Russia's 'near abroad' lies a further patchwork of small and medium-sized states in East Central Europe. The fate of these countries has been long determined by their unfortunate location in the structural distribution of power. Sandwiched between Germany in the west and Russia in the east, these 'lands between' have been vulnerable to the shifting sands of great power politics. Historically, the countries of East Central Europe have been dominated by one or the other of the region's flanking powers, generating a deep-seated sense of insecurity in the region. These lands between also provided the catalyst for two world wars and the Cold War: as Henry Kissinger noted, the 'principal cause of European conflicts in the past 150 years has been the existence of a no-man's land between the German and Russian peoples'.[97] History and geography have

not, therefore, dealt the peoples of East Central Europe a good hand. Tragedy has been the dominant *leitmotiv* of their past, and more often than not they have been the objects, rather than the subjects, of history.[98] Whether the Germans and Russians have fought each other or cooperated together, the peoples of East Central Europe have suffered.

Many of the countries in the region owe their modern statehood to the peace settlement that followed the Great War. These new states, however, with the partial exception of Czechoslovakia, were economically weak, political unstable and riven by ethno-national cleavages. Given the prevalence of border disputes, irredentism and discontented national minorities, the region was 'primed for conflict'. Historically, therefore, East Central Europe has constituted a *Zwischeneuropa*, 'a zone, that is, of weak states, national prejudice, inequality, poverty, and *schlammassel*'.[99]

Given their relative weakness compared to the great powers on either flank, the countries of the region have faced two strategic options: either to align with one of the great powers against the other, or to preserve an equidistance between the two, and seek security guarantees from a more distant great power. In the interwar years, they looked to France and the UK – neither of which proved particularly reliable. Since the end of Cold War bipolarity, the countries of the region have turned to the United States – Europe's 'off-shore balancer' – to provide security guarantees through NATO against Russia. At the same time, they have sought multilateral insulation from the EU against German economic power and political influence.

In the immediate wake of the *annus mirabilis*, a number of former dissidents hoped that East Central Europe could escape from the iron cage of geopolitics and emerge as an apolitical 'imagined community' in a Europe 'whole and free'.[100] These aspirations were associated with the concept of *Mitteleuropa*, an idea that mixed nostalgia for a golden age of multi-cultural cooperation in the Danubian basin with dreams of future cooperation between post-communist democracies.[101] Politically, the *Mitteleuropa* idea was manifested in the 'Visegrad group', which envisaged cooperation in their joint 'return to Europe'. However, it soon became apparent that their return to Europe was characterised more by competition than cooperation, and after the August 1991 coup in the Soviet Union and the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia, the new political elites focused on NATO membership as the solution to their security concerns.[102]

Although the idea of *Mitteleuropa* continues to have some currency, it has little political, economic or strategic substance.[103] The Visegrad group continues to function as a means of consultation and policy coordination within the EU, and there are occasional summit meetings of leaders from the wider region. But the reality is that it is not the dissident's vision of an apolitical imagined community that has been realised, but that of Friedrich Naumann.[104] In 1916, Naumann published *Mitteleuropa*, in which he proposed the creation of a zone of German economic domination and political hegemony across Central and

Eastern Europe. The explicitly imperialist version of a Teutonic *Mitteleuropa* was thoroughly discredited by the atrocities of the First World War and the *Vernichtungskrieg* ('war of extermination') of the Second, and has been explicitly rejected by successive governments of the Federal Republic.[105] Nonetheless, Germany is now the dominant economic force in the region and its political influence is correspondingly strong, despite the multilateral wrapping of the EU.

In the context of balanced multipolarity, the countries of East Central Europe enjoy a relatively benign external security environment. Economically, they have benefited from EU membership, both as recipients of structural funds and from access to EU markets. As members of NATO, they enjoy Article V security guarantees, and have cultivated close political and military relations with the United States. The immediate military threat from Russia has receded, although their dependence on Russian oil and gas leaves them vulnerable to pressure from Moscow. Russia has cultivated amiable relations with Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, but continues to exert political pressure on Estonia and Latvia through disputes over borders and Russian minorities.[106] The most important country in *Mitteleuropa*, however, is Poland, with whom Russia's relations are cool if not frosty.

Whilst the external security environment in East Central Europe is currently relatively benign, these traditional 'buffer states' remain sensitive to relations between the great power 'elephants' in whose shadow they live. In the early twenty-first century, their concerns focused on a perceived Russo-German condominium, exemplified by the Northern Gas Pipeline, which they view as a threat comparable – according to the Polish defence minister – to the Nazi–Soviet pact of 1939.[107] More generally, countries like Poland and the Baltic three have worried that Europe's major powers have been too keen to develop good relations with Moscow, and have not paid sufficient attention to their economic and strategic interests. Thus whilst balanced multipolarity has created a more benign external security environment for the *mitteleuropäische* 'lands between', it has not allowed these countries to escape from the iron cage of geography, history and power politics.

Poland: hinge or rampart?

East Central Europe has been a classic 'buffer zone' between Germany and Russia, within which Poland's role has been pivotal. Poland has historically functioned as the bulwark of European Christendom against perceived threats from the Eurasian hinterland, and as Polish Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki noted in January 1990: 'The idea of being the "ramparts of civilisation" and, by the same token, of Europe, has remained alive in Poland throughout the three centuries.'[108]

In the context of balanced multipolarity, however, Poland faces cross-cutting structural pressures, giving it the opportunity to manoeuvre within the interstices of the balance of power, and to play a more constructive role as a 'hinge' state

within a 'gateway region'.[109] Poland is located on the eastern borders of the European Union and serves as a conduit for trade between the EU and Russia, Ukraine and the CIS. The main oil and gas pipelines also transit through Poland. Poland has extensive and growing economic relations with Ukraine, and shares a border with the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad, which is now surrounded by the EU's Schengen borders. For all these reasons, Poland has a systemic interest in acting as a hinge state in the gateway region bridging the EU and Russia.

Yet at the same time, Poland's tragic history and its continuing strategic sensitivities have led many in Warsaw to see Russian–EU relations in zero-sum terms, and to be suspicious of Russo-German cooperation. Consequently, it is torn between serving as the ramparts of the Euro-Atlantic community or functioning as a hinge state in a gateway region. Poland certainly plays an important role in the international politics of the 'lands between'. In terms of geographical size, population and GDP, Poland may only be a medium-sized state, but it harbours ambitious foreign policy goals and seeks to punch above its weight.[110] Warsaw wants influence within the EU and to be included as part of an enlarged EU motor, through the mechanism of the 'Weimar triangle'; it seeks a privileged role in shaping the EU's *Ostpolitik*; it has profiled itself as Washington's 'new model ally', sending troops to Afghanistan and Iraq; it is seeking to shape its immediate environment by encouraging opposition groups in Belarus and supporting pro-Western forces in Ukraine; and it long cultivated a strategic partnership with Ukraine, and is now a leading proponent of Ukrainian membership of NATO.

Poland's ambitious foreign policy agenda raises two questions: is its leadership up to the demands it has set itself?; and are Poland's relative power capabilities sufficient to provide it with the material foundations necessary to pursue its broad-ranging foreign policy objectives? Poland has taken on major military responsibilities in Afghanistan, Kosovo and Iraq, but its armed forces have been stretched to breaking point in so doing. Politically, Poland has donned Britain's mantle of being an 'awkward' partner within the EU, and is in danger of isolating and marginalising itself;[111] its relations with Berlin are prickly; it has been a vociferous critic of Germany's strategic partnership with Russia, and vehemently opposes the Northern Gas Pipeline project; and it has antagonised Russia by its active intervention in the domestic affairs of Belarus and Ukraine, its advocacy of Ukrainian membership of NATO, and by its tacit support for Chechen rebels.[112]

The Polish government elected in 2006 is dominated by the conservative Law and Justice Party, which waged a strongly anti-German and virulently anti-Russian election campaign. The new government is also closely aligned with the influential Catholic radio station, 'Radio Maryja', whose tasteless anti-semitism has sullied the image of Poland's young democracy.[113] Poland's current domestic politics thus present few grounds for optimism that its leadership can develop a mature strategic vision that goes beyond a simplistic zero-sum approach to international politics.[114] Whether or not the current Polish leadership

proves itself capable of strategic learning, Poland will undoubtedly remain an important player in the international politics of East Central Europe, with the potential to serve as either rampart or hinge between Russia and the EU.

V CONCLUSION

Winston Churchill once said that Russia was a 'riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma', the key to which was perhaps the 'Russian national interest'. From a structural realist perspective, the key to understanding the broad patterns of Russian grand strategy is its location within the structural distribution of power in the international system. Russia's behaviour has reflected the systemic pressures which drive great powers to maximise their security, and therefore, their power.

Russia's weakened condition following the end of the Cold War dictated a policy of accommodation with the West designed to provide a benign external environment for regenerating its domestic power capabilities. As Russian power has revived, however, this policy of cooperation with the United States and the European great powers has given way to a more complex pattern of accommodation and competition. Growing security competition is most evident in Central Asia and the Caspian Sea region. At stake here is control over the world's second most important source of hydrocarbon fuel reserves.

In Eastern Europe, security competition has been less intense. Nonetheless, Moscow is clearly unwilling to passively accept the altered power balance created by NATO and EU enlargement in 1990s, or to acquiesce in Western attempts to re-write the rules of the international system as a result of the Kosovo and Iraq Wars. Russia's relative power capabilities in the context of balanced multipolarity do not suggest that intense security competition leading to renewed East–West conflict is likely. But they do suggest a competitive struggle for power and influence in the region – focused most immediately on Ukraine. Security competition is also manifested in conflicts over energy resources – a growing source of conflict in the wider international system. Russia's vast energy reserves, and its control over key oil and gas pipelines from the Caspian Sea and Central Asia, give it a powerful weapon – one which it seems increasingly disposed to use.

In the context of balanced multipolarity, therefore, Russia is likely to be an 'adversarial partner', with a foreign policy characterised by a prickly pragmatism combining cooperation and competition. Regardless of Russia's domestic constitutional order and the democratic credentials of its leadership, the structural pressures of balanced multipolarity will tend to reproduce these patterns of foreign policy behaviour. Moscow's relations with Germany will remain crucial: its relationship with the EU will be largely mediated through Berlin. The task for the Berlin Republic is to find an appropriate balance in its foreign policy between East and West, and between Moscow and *Mitteleuropa* in its *Ostpolitik*.

Russia's future is certainly critical to the prospects for the European balance of power. If Russia's economic recovery and political consolidation were to falter, Europe would loose a valuable counter-weight to German power in the East. If, on the other hand, it is able to build on its new-found wealth from energy exports, carry out structural economic reforms and address its acute domestic political and social problems, it could emerge once again as a hegemonic power in Eastern Europe – thereby also upsetting Europe's balanced multipolarity. Much therefore hangs on the future of this 'riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma'.

9

REALISM, TRAGEDY AND ETHICS

> Politics will, to the end of history, be an area where conscience and power meet, where the ethical and coercive factors of human life will interpenetrate and work out their tentative and uneasy compromises.
>
> Reinhold Niebuhr[1]

This book's purpose has been twofold: first, to use realist international theory to elucidate the motive forces and structural dynamics of the European security system; and second, to challenge some of the most influential liberal-idealist approaches to international politics that have dominated the debate on European security since the *annus mirabilis* of 1989. These two concerns have given this book a particularly British character and tone: in the United States, where structural realism has acquired a commanding position in the International Relations community, many important debates take place between realists, focused on various emendations of Waltz's original theory of international politics. In Europe, however, and especially in the British International Relations community, Realism is a marginalised and – I would argue – much misunderstood theory. Realism has long since fallen out of favour in British academia, both because it jars with the dominant liberal values that permeate British and European politics, and because it has been labelled as an 'American' theory, and things American are decidedly out of fashion.

For these reasons, this book has been primarily concerned with critiquing the liberal-idealist perspectives that have dominated the British and European debates on European security, rather than in engaging in the on-going controversies within the American realist community. Consequently, it has not explored the nuances of 'second-generation' defensive realism or explicated the varying analytical implications of 'defensive', 'offensive' and 'neoclassical' realism. Rather, it has gone 'back to basics', focusing on the core elements of neorealist systemic theory as originated by Kenneth Waltz and subsequently developed by John Mearsheimer. The aim has been to demonstrate the richness of structural realist theory and its ability to explain theoretically the challenges and dilemmas confronting European policy-makers in the early twenty-first century.

In questioning the hegemony of liberal-idealist assumptions about European security, I might be accused – like Lenin – of having 'bent the stick too far in the other direction'. However, my aim in adding the dissonant tones of realist international theory to the conversation on European security has been to open up space for debate, not close it down. Waltz has argued that the most important decision regarding a theory is not whether or not it is true, but whether 'it is worth taking seriously'.[2] My aim has been to demonstrate that structural realism is worth taking seriously, and that it does offer important insights even when presented with a 'hard case' like post-Cold War Europe.

In order to open up space for further discussion, this concluding chapter considers three sets of issues. First, it summarises the strengths of structural realism as a theory of international politics. Second, it outlines the distinctive emendations made to realist international theory in this book. And third, it responds to charges that – whatever its undoubted explanatory power – neorealism is amoral, if not immoral, in its approach to the study of international politics. This criticism, it is argued, misunderstands the nature and potentialities of structural realism. Although it is not an explicitly political and normative theory, structural realism can provide the foundations for ethical statecraft by identifying the structural constraints within which states, as 'situated actors', operate. Drawing on a range of influences – most importantly, Michael Oakeshott, Reinhold Niebuhr and Max Weber – the chapter concludes by outlining a non-teleological ethics based on the principles of prudence, scepticism and reciprocity.

I THE STRENGTHS OF REALIST INTERNATIONAL THEORY

The utility of structural realism

What light can structural realism shed on the contemporary European security system? Compared to competing theories and approaches, what does it offer to the study of international politics that is distinctive and illuminating? In short, what is realism's 'value added'?

First and foremost, structural realism provides a way of thinking theoretically and analytically about international politics. Using deductive theory, neorealism offers a set of analytical tools for delving beneath the surface play of events and identifying the underlying structural forces driving the broad patterns of strategic interactions in anarchic international systems.[3] As even its fiercest critics acknowledge, neorealism has 'helped to introduce greater sophistication to a field that has been shy of theory and insulated from the controversies which are central to other social sciences'.[4] A central concern of this book has been to demonstrate the possibilities and potential of deductive theory, and to encourage a more self-consciously theoretical approach to the European security system. Although such an approach is inimitable to substantial portions of the UK

academic community, deductive theory should at least be given a fair hearing, rather than being labelled as 'positivist' and simply dismissed out of hand. With John Vasquez, I believe that 'we can all agree that *Theory of International Politics* has not only been worth taking seriously but has enhanced the role of theory within the field, both by making scholars think more theoretically and by providing an informative guide to research that might otherwise have been overly inductive, if not idiosyncratic'.[5]

Second, structural realism provides solid theoretical and scientific foundations for 'speaking truth to power'. By challenging the dominant liberal-idealist discourse that has come to occupy a hegemonic position in the debate on post-Cold War European security, realist international theory opens up space for critical analysis and debate. This can help clarify assumptions and perspectives that have become the 'common sense' of our liberal era, both in academia and in the corridors of power. In the United States, neorealists have long been at the forefront in criticising the foreign and security policies of successive administrations. Both Ken Waltz and Hans Morgenthau were early critics of the Vietnam War. More recently, Robert Gilpin, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt have advanced trenchant criticisms of the Iraq War, and the latter two have not been afraid to court controversy by criticising the role played by powerful sectional interests in distorting America's perception of its vital national security interests.[6] What gives their criticisms force and credibility is that they are based on a sophisticated theoretical understanding of international politics, not on idiosyncratic normative or political agendas. In the same way, neorealist theory can provide the foundations for critical reflections on European security, and by speaking truth to power, open up space for debate and discussion.

Third, structural realism encourages scholars to 'think politically'. Many liberal-idealists tend to assume an underlying harmony of interests between liberal-democracies in a cooperative 'international society'. Those of a more utopian disposition believe that discrete national political communities can be – or at least *should* be – dissolved into a global cosmopolitan order.[7] Liberal-idealists also posit the existence of 'universal' norms and values, and are prone to projecting value differences onto conflicts of interests with other countries (such as Russia or Turkey). By emphasising the irreducible existence of rival national interests in international anarchy, realists challenge this profoundly apolitical approach to international politics. Realist international theory is grounded on a recognition of the existence of discrete political communities, each of which generate their own conceptions of the 'good life' and how to achieve it. This highlights the need for international political processes to accommodate competing interests, and implicitly recognises the legitimacy of the 'other'. Realists are sceptical of universalist claims made on behalf of discrete normative agendas (such as 'human rights');[8] they contest liberal-idealist assumptions that a cosmopolitan ethos is superior to communitarianism;[9] and they question the Benthamite view that nation-states are associates not rivals, which implies that the pursuit of relative gains is somehow 'unethical'. By recognising the

existence of rival interests and the propensity for security competition in self-help systems, realism opens up space for political processes designed to manage and resolve conflicts on the basis of reciprocity and prudence, rather than through moral crusades designed to reshape the world in a liberal image.[10] 'Thinking in terms of national interests – of balancing power and commitments', David Clinton has written, forces policy makers 'to be calculators rather than crusaders'.[11]

Finally, realism's deductive theory provides the basis for thinking analytically and conceptually about the future of the European security system. By identifying the dominant trends and 'drivers' of change in the European regional security system, realist international theory not only offers tools for understanding and explaining contemporary developments, it can also make predictions about the future. Prediction is inevitably a risky undertaking, especially when those predictions concern the future. In Ibsen's play *Hedda Gabler* (1890), one character (Tesman) exclaims, 'But, good heavens, we know nothing of the future', to which another (Lovberg) replies, 'No, but there is a thing or two to be said about it all the same'. Analysing the structural distribution of relative power capabilities provides a means for identifying the incentive structure within which states as 'situated actors' operate. Whilst recognising the play of contingency and happenstance in international politics, deductive theory can identify the structural pressures generated by the logic of anarchy which 'shape and shove' the behaviour of the system's primary units – thus providing foundations for making predictions about future trends.[12]

II THE LIMITATIONS AND LACUNAS OF REALISM

The limits of parsimony

Structural realism provides a powerful analytical tool with which to understand and explain post-Cold War European security. By identifying the structural distribution of relative power capabilities as the primary 'independent variable' which shapes the recurrent patterns of international politics and the behaviour of the system's primary units, realist international theory offers important insights into the dynamics of the European security system. It explains some small but important aspects of international politics, most significantly, the manner in which the international system 'shapes and shoves' international politics. In so doing, it should be noted, it elucidates not simply the broad outcomes of international politics (war or peace, and the formation of power balances), but also the grand strategies of the system's most important actors – the great powers. The development of systemic theory has thus constituted a 'Copernican revolution' in the discipline of International Relations, which has opened up new and fruitful avenues for analysing the systemic dynamics of international politics.

But structural realism's greatest strength is also its greatest weakness. The

theory's parsimony and elegance gives it considerable explanatory power, but provides only a broad-brush approach to international politics. Waltzian theory deals primarily with recurrent patterns and general trends, and lacks explanatory power when confronted with more narrowly focused research puzzles.[13] It therefore washes out much of the detail and nuance that gives the study of international politics its abiding interest for scholars and students. Moreover, in some cases, a structural analysis is indeterminate in terms of predictive behaviour, and can therefore shed only limited light on outcomes and behaviour, particularly in contexts of balanced multipolarity.[14] As a tool for analysing the European security system, structural realism focuses on the role played by the logic of anarchy and considerations of power in the strategic calculations of states. It can explain the broad patterns of cooperation and conflict in contemporary Europe, but cannot elucidate the tactical calculations of states when they consider specific policy issues like humanitarian intervention, transatlantic anti-terrorist cooperation or the future of the OSCE.

Realist international theory is thus a *necessary* but not *sufficient* tool for 'turning the soil of ignorance' about the post-Cold War European security system. A structural analysis identifies the broad systemic pressures which provide the backdrop to diplomatic and strategic interactions, and which underpin the institutional architecture of the European security system. However, if we wish to understand the detailed decision-making processes behind foreign and security policies, and the nuances of security cooperation and competition in Europe, we must supplement a structural analysis with more fine-grained and narrowly-focused theories. These supplementary theories can help evaluate the significance of important intervening variables, which modify or impede the effects of the independent variable (the structural distribution of power).

Within the realist community, it is widely recognised that a structural analysis of the distribution of relative power capabilities cannot explain all important or interesting questions in international politics.[15] Indeed, the very point of a theory of international politics is that it provides a simplification or abstraction of reality, and seeks to explain only a limited range of phenomena in a bounded domain. Structural realism provides valuable insights into the 'shaping and shoving' effect of systemic forces. But if one wishes to investigate a more specific and narrowly-focused research puzzle (such as the foreign policy behaviour of a particular great power, or the dynamics of a specific regional security system in a relatively limited time-frame), one needs to supplement neorealism with other theories, or include additional variables. In some cases, this will involve opening up the 'black box' of the state to examine decision-making processes; in others, it will involve a consideration of the role of ideational factors, such as strategic culture or threat perceptions.

The concern to sharpen neorealism's explanatory power by drawing on supplementary theories or incorporating additional variables is apparent throughout the realist community. It is particularly evident in the work of 'second-generation' defensive realists.[16] Some have focused on the

'offensive–defence balance' to explain variations in alliance formation and propensity for war;[17] others have emphasised the importance of perception and misperception, or distinguished between status quo and revisionist powers (one of the traditional concerns of 'second image' theory). Second-generation defensive realism has been accompanied by the emergence of 'neoclassical realism', which seeks to combine a structural analysis with a classical realist concern with regime type and political agency.[18] Even offensive realists have drawn on 'second image' factors to supplement their structural analyses: Mearsheimer, for example, in his influential article 'Back to the Future', identifies nationalism as an important factor influencing the likelihood of war in unbalanced multipolarity.[19] Mearsheimer and Walt have also drawn attention to the role of the Jewish lobby in shaping US policy towards the Middle East, which they argue helps explain the Bush administration's decision for war against Iraq – a war which is otherwise an anomaly for Mearsheimer's formulation of offensive realism.[20]

This widespread tendency to build on Waltz's structural theory by including additional variables has been interpreted by some critics as an indication of the poverty of neorealist theory. John Vasquez has argued that it demonstrates that neorealism is a degenerating research programme in Lakatosian terms – a charge vigorously contested by others in the American International Relations community.[21] Colin Elman has concluded that the charge remains unproven.[22] William Wohlforth has gone further and questioned the very relevance of Imre Lakatos's theory of a 'scientific research programme' for neorealism. He has pointed out that many of the scholars referred to by Vasquez are not trying to 'rescue' Waltzian theory but to bury it, with the aim of advancing their own theories in its stead. Far from the proliferation of rival 'realist' theories representing a 'degenerate' research programme, it simply reflects an attempt at 'product differentiation' by ambitious academics seeking fame, fortune and tenure.[23]

Beyond the vagaries of the American academic market, the tendency to dilute Waltzian parsimony by including additional variables and employing supplementary theories reflects the requirements of empirically-orientated research puzzles, and is consistent with structural realism's recognition that its deductive theory can only explain a limited range of phenomena. At the same time, it is instructive that, when it comes to analysing specific international security issues, structural realism 'is often a natural place to start, because it is rational, parsimonious theory'.[24] As Charles Glaser argues, realism can serve a productive role within multi-level research in cases where 'the combination of levels of analysis is not ad hoc but, rather, guided by realist theory'. He concludes that developing multi-level theoretical frameworks which build on a structural analysis is progressive for the field of International Relations in general, and reflects positively on realist international theory which has contributed significantly to this progress.

Realist theory and the European security 'puzzle'

This book has used structural realist theory to study the post-Cold War European security system. In doing so, it has drawn on the 'hard core' of neorealist theory, as originated by Waltz and developed by Mearsheimer. Nonetheless, given its concern with a specific and contingent research puzzle, the theoretical framework outlined in Chapter 3 includes some emendations of its own. These reflect a variety of influences, from sociological role theory; the political philosophy of Michael Oakeshott; the Critical Realism of Roy Bhaskar; the Christian Realism of Reinhold Niebuhr; and geopolitical theory. In doing so, however, it has sought to remain consistent with the core tenets of structural realism – which focus centrally on the systemic determinants of international outcomes and behaviour, and which emphasise the competitive struggle for power and influence generated by the self-help imperatives of international anarchy.

The theoretical framework presented earlier in this book makes six major emendations to Waltzian structuralism and offensive realist theory. The first is the emphasis placed on strategic learning. This is an essential corollary of the assumption that states are rational actors, capable of acting consciously, reflexively and strategically; it does, however, raise further questions about the durability and malleability of strategic culture, and its impact on state behaviour. The second emendation is the definition of 'grand strategy' to include the specification and ranking of preferences; this involves some consideration of unit-level processes of interest articulation and integration. The third is the integration of foreign policy role conceptions into a structural realist analysis of grand strategy; this raises further questions about historical and ideational influences on role, and qualifies the materialist ontological assumptions of structural realism. The fourth is its inclusion of 'milieu-shaping' and 'second-order normative concerns' as theoretical propositions about state behaviour; this modifies offensive realism's traditional image of states as power-maximisers locked into a zero-sum competition for power, security and influence. The fifth is the definition of power in terms of a basket of attributes rather than focusing more narrowly on military capabilities; this suggests that 'power maximisation' and 'security competition' cannot be understood simply in terms of military rivalry. Finally, the theory presented here combines a structural analysis of relative power capabilities with geography, thereby breaking with the more parsimonious approach of Waltz.

These emendations represent an attempt to give structural realism greater traction in dealing with the 'hard case' of post-Cold War European security, in which power capabilities within a multipolar system are roughly balanced, and no potential hegemon threatens the equilibrium of the regional security system. Neither Waltz nor Mearsheimer devoted much attention to international outcomes or state behaviour in balanced multipolarity, a lacuna which this book has sought to address. Nonetheless, I would argue that the theoretical explanation presented in preceding chapters is broadly consistent with the 'hard core' of structural realist theory.

One issue raised by the preceding discussion is the need for structural realism to remain open to wider intellectual debates in cognate disciplines if it is to continue to serve as a rich source of deductive theories generating a coherent research programme. In formulating his *Theory of International Politics*, Kenneth Waltz drew on a variety of sources, from micro-economic theory to the sociology of Emil Durkheim. If realism is to retake some of the ground lost to liberal-idealist perspectives in the UK and Europe, and to retain its influential place in the American International Relations community, it must be prepared to constantly question, refine and develop its core concepts, theoretical assumptions and deductive logic. This requires that it remains receptive to new influences from a range of cognate disciplines in the social sciences, philosophy and history. As noted in the introductory chapter, an open and lively conversation between academics working in a plurality of paradigms is the life-blood of academia, without which scientific progress is simply not possible. For this reason, realists must continue to engage in, and learn from, academic debates amongst scholars working in competing traditions and schools of thought.

III REALISM AND INTERNATIONAL ETHICS

'To a far greater extent than any other perspective', Andrew Linklater has alleged, 'neo-realism has highlighted the moral impoverishment of the study of international relations.'[25] Linklater's harsh judgement reflects both his own utopian idealism and his antipathy to the neorealist theoretical enterprise. Nonetheless, his views are typical of a broader consensus that views structural realism as amoral at best, and immoral at worst. Neorealism is seen as glorifying power and military force, and advocating a dangerous and ultimately self-defeating *Realpolitik* devoid of sentiment or compassion. It is regarded as a muscle-bound and hawkish theory that reifies power, and which is therefore irresponsible and dangerous.

Such views represent a caricature of structural realism that fail to grasp its purpose or implications. Yet to some extent, neorealists have been their own worst enemies. They have opened themselves up to this criticism by their tendency to largely ignore the moral and ethical dimension of international politics. Whereas classical realists devoted considerable energy to exploring the relationship between politics and morality (largely by attacking 'moralism' in foreign policy), neorealists have concentrated their attention on developing a theory of international politics not tied to any particular normative or political agenda. Whilst this means that neorealist theory is not associated with an explicit normative programme, it does not mean that neorealism is incompatible with ethical thinking about foreign policy and international politics.[26] On the contrary, I would argue, neorealism provides far stronger foundations for an ethical foreign policy than does liberal-idealism.

Realism and normative political theory

Before outlining a realist ethics, it is helpful to clarify the different purposes served by normative political theory. Andrew Hurrell has proposed a threefold categorisation of normative theory, based on three distinct types of questions: first, what impact do norms have on international politics?; second, what ought we to do?; and third, given the realities of political life, what can be done? [27]

The first of these is primarily an empirical question, although one difficult to effectively operationalise. The second takes us deep into the murky waters of normative theorising. Hurrell quotes Mervyn Frost to the effect that there has been too little normative theory concerned with the second question, namely 'in what would a just world order consist?'[28] From a realist perspective, however, it is hard to see much value in such abstract normative musing on the good life. Reflecting on 'what ought to be done' without taking into account international political structures risks succumbing to utopian dreaming and idealist illusions.[29] It easily degenerates into an empty moralising that assumes that changing social and political circumstances requires only sufficient political will and a determined effort to change 'hearts and minds'. It is difficult not to conclude that speculating on the constitutive features of a 'just world order' is not only a fairly pointless activity, it is also – potentially at least – politically dangerous and ethically flawed. To propose a course of action on the basis of idealist notions of what 'ought to be' is both dangerous and immoral if it leads to policies that leave political communities and their citizens vulnerable to aggression, coercion and exploitation from others.[30]

Realist ethics are therefore grounded in the third of Hurrell's normative perspectives, which examines 'the extent to which moral behaviour is heavily constrained by the dynamics of political life'.[31] Realists assume that to act effectively requires knowledge of existing circumstances together with the power to act. Causal knowledge about the way in which international politics works is a necessary precondition for making informed moral choices between alternative courses of action. Realist theory is above all an attempt to identify the parameters within which action to change international politics will be effective.[32] From this starting-point, a distinctly realist approach to moral and ethical behaviour can be developed.

Structural constraints and ethical statecraft

Morality involves choice. Where there is no choice, where behaviour is predetermined, there can be no morality. To make moral decisions, one must have choices between alternative courses of action. The moral life, Oakeshott argues, 'appears only when human behaviour is free from natural necessity; that is, when there are alternatives in human conduct'.[33] In international politics, the range of alternatives is constrained by the structure of the international system. 'Men make their own history', Marx famously argued in *The Eighteenth*

Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, 'but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.[34] Much the same can be said for the state as an international actor, which makes its own history under circumstances directly encountered, given and transmitted from the past.' In this sense, states are 'situated actors' located within distinct structural contexts that define the range of potential strategies and opportunities available to them.[35]

All too often, it is assumed – and sometimes insinuated – that structural realists are favourably disposed towards the international status quo and care little or nothing about manifestations of injustice, conflict and aggression, however shocking or egregious.[36] This is most certainly not the case. Politically and normatively, neorealists come in all shapes and sizes, and many would admit to being 'closet liberals'.[37] Structural realists are not coldly indifferent to conflict and injustice. They do, however, recognise that there are limits to political agency imposed by the 'strategic selectivity of structure'. Realists seek to identify the extent to which systemic factors either enable or constrain political choices in international politics, thereby 'shaping and shoving' – but not determining – state behaviour.

Anarchy and the tragedy of international politics

Neorealist theory provides a means of identifying the 'parameters of the possible', i.e. the structural constraints of the international system, and the extent to which they 'shape and shove' state behaviour. Structural realism, Mearsheimer notes, assumes that state behaviour 'is largely shaped by the *material* structure of the international system. The distribution of material capabilities among states is the key factor for understanding world politics. For realists, some level of security competition among great powers is inevitable because of the material structure of the international system.'[38]

Realists believe that it is difficult, if not nigh on impossible, to transcend the structural limits of anarchy. The only conceivable means of achieving this is through one state emerging as a global hegemon – a development highly improbable because of what Mearsheimer terms the 'stopping power of water'. An interesting – but flawed – argument for a 'global Leviathan', building on realist premises, has been advanced by Campbell Craig. He maintains that a 'New Leviathan', in the form of a 'world state', is now essential in order to escape the dangers of a 'nuclear-armed international anarchy'. A new Leviathan is imperative because in the long term 'deterrence is bound to fail', leading to a nuclear war that 'is likely to kill hundreds of millions of people, and possibly exterminate the human race'. Such a world state is not only necessary, Craig argues, it is also possible according to the realist logic of Niebuhr, Morgenthau and ('effectively') Waltz. It is both a 'Realist possibility', and a realistic political possibility because of the 'unipolar nature of international power politics today',

which 'provides an unusually propitious opportunity for global state formation'.[39] Craig's argument is creative and original, but ultimately involves a liberal-idealist leap of faith into a brave new world of (American-dominated) world government. Most contemporary neorealists – Waltz included – would argue that whatever the 'logic' of the case for a new Leviathan, a world state is highly unlikely to emerge. Moreover, were such a state to arise, Waltz has argued, it would be a recipe for global civil war.[40]

Realist theory thus assumes that states will remain the primary actors in the international system for the foreseeable future, and that consequently, anarchy not hierarchy will remain the dominant ordering principle of the international system.[41] Anarchy and the unequal distribution of power in the international system place constraints on projects to achieve perpetual peace, international harmony and institutionalised cooperation. 'To achieve their objectives and maintain their security, units in a condition of anarchy – be they people, corporations, states or whatever – must rely on the means they can generate and the arrangements they can make for themselves'.[42] Because international politics is a self-help realm, Realists remain sceptical about liberal-idealist claims that international organisations, international law or democratic governments can provide durable and dependent foundations for a stable peace order, regardless of the structural distribution of power. Peace and international cooperation, realists argue, is hard to achieve in the absence of a balance of power, or the clear dominance of defence over offence (of which the existence of an assured second-strike nuclear deterrence is the only clear manifestation). On the basis of the rough balance of power, the prospects for arms control agreements, cooperative governance or multilateral cooperation are favourable; but they remain vulnerable to shifts in the underlying structural distribution of power. Peace, and the cooperative institutions of a 'society of states', will therefore always be a fragile condition in an anarchic international system.

Nonetheless, realist scepticism about the prospects for transcending the structural constraints of a self-help system is not incompatible with a political and ethical commitment to preventing aggression, conflict and injustice. Realists, however, tend to be dubious of ambitious projects for large-scale social and political engineering, and sceptical of 'rationalist' schemes to establish utopian peace orders designed without reference to the structural dynamics of the international system.[43] Realists are painfully aware of the often tragic nature of international politics, and of the danger that noble intentions can generate unintended outcomes.[44] They are not therefore favourably disposed towards radical political programmes based on abstract ideals such as 'emancipation', cosmopolitan order or perfect justice. As Reinhold Niebuhr observed, the concern of 'collective man' cannot be 'the creation of an ideal society in which there will be uncoerced and perfect peace and justice, but a society in which there will be enough justice, and in which coercion will be sufficiently nonviolent to prevent his common enterprise from issuing into complete disaster'.[45]

'Policy', in Michael Oakeshott's words, 'will not be the imagination of some new sort of society, or the transformation of an existing society so as to make it correspond with an abstract ideal; it will be the perception of what needs doing now in order to realize more fully the intimations of our existing society.'[46]

Indeterminacy and second-order normative concerns

Neorealism is an avowedly parsimonious theory that seeks to explain only a few aspects of reality – albeit important ones. It certainly does not claim to provide a comprehensive explanation of all aspects of international life. This leaves considerable scope for normative debates on a wide range of secondary issues where the imperatives of security and survival in a self-help system are less intense. Realists do not deny or bemoan the fact that liberal ideas (such as Just War, human rights and democracy promotion) can and do shape policy; what Realists question is the claim that such ideas continue to determine policy when they conflict with vital national interests – especially when national security or core economic interests are at stake. Just War theory provides a perfect example of the limited traction of liberal ideals in a self-help system. Realists would argue that the ethical concerns embodied in Just War theory are less likely to shape the conduct of military operations in total wars of survival than they are in limited wars of choice or conscience.[47] Similarly, concerns about human rights and democracy promotion are more likely to influence foreign policy-makers when national security or vital economic interests are not at stake. Thus for example the Bush Administration advocates democracy and human rights in Belarus, Ukraine and Georgia (states formerly in the Soviet sphere of influence), but is muted in its criticism of authoritarian oppression in Azerbaijan, Chad, Pakistan or Saudi Arabia (states that are geostrategically or economically important, and which are regarded as allies in the 'war on terror').

Considerable scope for ethical and moral approaches to international politics is also opened up by the sometimes indeterminate nature of systemic pressures. Systemic theory is concerned with the structural pressures on states, yet these pressures can be – indeed, frequently are – indeterminate in terms of state behaviour or international outcomes. An illustrative example is humanitarian intervention, which involves intervention by strong states in the internal affairs of weak states. If the weak state is not in a region of geostrategic consequence, and possesses no resources of significance to the global economy, then decisions to intervene involve political, military and ethical questions divorced from the structural distribution of power. If the balance of power is not affected, neorealism has little to add to the debate on whether or not to intervene. In contexts where structure is indeterminate and vital national interests are not at stake, therefore, foreign policy decisions are more likely to be shaped by domestic political interests and moral considerations. 'If the preservation of the state is not in question, national goals easily fluctuate between the grandiose and the frivolous.'[48]

Although ethical principles are less likely to shape foreign and security interests when vital national interests are at stake than they are in contexts where structure is indeterminate, this does not absolve statesmen and women from weighing ethical issues in the balance when they consider alternative policy options, however constrained. Neorealism emphasises the enduring constraints of structure on the behaviour of states. But structures 'shape and shove', they do not determine behaviour and outcomes – not only, Waltz argues, because 'unit-level and structural causes interact, but also because the shaping and shoving of structures may be successfully resisted'. 'With skill and determination', he continues, 'structural constraints can sometimes be countered.'[49] As 'situated actors', states are constrained by structural pressures, but their behaviour is not determined mechanically by systemic forces. Because they can chose between alternative courses of action, states can still make moral choices. In this light, Niebuhr's admonitions concerning the implications of political realism for individual moral behaviour have resonance for states' ethical choices: 'No political realism which emphasises the inevitability and necessity of a social struggle, can absolve individuals of the obligation to check their own egoism, to comprehend the interests of others and thus to enlarge the areas of cooperation.'[50]

This sensitivity to ethical considerations does not mean that peace and cooperation is always the most 'ethical' choice. Pacifism is rarely an ethically defensible stance in a self-help system. Policy-makers must consider the security of their own citizens, and the health of the wider international system – particularly the balance of power – when they are faced with decisions about war and peace. At times, pre-emption and preventive war – not compromise and appeasement – might be the morally right choice. As Churchill noted,

> The Sermon on the Mount is the last word in Christian ethics. Everyone respects the Quakers. Still, it is not on these terms that Ministers assume their responsibilities of guiding states. Their duty is first so to deal with other nations as to avoid strife and war and to eschew aggression in all its forms, whether for nationalistic or ideological objects. But the safety of the State, the lives and freedom of their own fellow countrymen, to whom they owe their position, make it right and imperative in the last resort, or when a final and definite conviction has been reached, that the use of force should not be excluded. If the circumstances are such to warrant it, force may be used. And if this is so, it should be used under the conditions which are most favourable. There is no merit in putting off a war for a year if, when it comes, it is a far worse war or one much harder to win. These are the tormenting dilemmas upon which mankind has throughout its history been so frequently impaled.[51]

Non-teleological ethics and the idioms of moral conduct

Liberalism is optimistic about the inevitability of progress; critical theorists, as heirs to the secular eschatology of Marxism, believe in the 'utopian realism' of 'emancipation'. Whether in its more moderate 'English school' guise, or in the more radical form of critical theory, liberal-idealists share a common belief that moral behaviour is associated with 'rationalist' politics and teleological political action.[52]

Realist ethics, by contrast, are non-teleological in character; realists seek to examine 'the extent to which moral behaviour is heavily constrained by the dynamics of political life', rather than musing on abstract schemes for a 'just world order'. Given the assumption that anarchy will remain the dominant ordering principle of international politics, and that tragedy is inherent in the structure of the international system, a realist ethics cannot be based on a conception of moral behaviour that consists in working to achieve a particular *telos* (a 'single substantive purpose') – whether rationally determined or revealed by religious prophecy.[53] Realists follow Michael Oakeshott in rejecting 'the illusion that in politics there is anywhere a safe harbour, a destination to be reached or even a detectable strand of progress'.[54] This non-teleological ethics implies a distinctive approach to statecraft: one that seeks to navigate the shifting tides of international politics, conscious of the ebb and flow of systemic forces:

> In political activity, then, men sail a boundless and bottomless sea; there is neither harbour for shelter nor floor for anchorage, neither starting-place nor appointed destination. The enterprise is to keep afloat on an even keel; the sea is both friend and enemy; and the seamanship consists in using the resources of a traditional manner of behaviour in order to make a friend of every hostile occasion.[55]

What is the basis of morality in this non-eschatological and non-teleological understanding of international politics? Here Michael Oakeshott's reading of Hobbes is apposite. Oakeshott argues that there are three 'idioms of moral conduct': a morality of communal ties; the morality of the common good; and the morality of individuality. In the first, 'good conduct is understood as appropriate participation in the unvarying activities of a community'. Such a 'morality of communal ties' implies the existence of deeply-rooted social conventions of various kinds defining a complex pattern of mutual obligations – a *Gemeinschaft*, to use the language of Max Weber and classical German sociology. Clearly, this idiom of morality is inappropriate for international politics because the international system is composed of sovereign political communities with competing national interests and rival conceptions of the *summum bonum* (the 'good life'): even the most starry-eyed proponent of 'international community' or 'international society' would be hard pushed to convincingly argue there is a 'moral community of humankind' based on a shared identity and shared values.[56]

The second idiom of morality envisages the existence of a socially constituted 'common good'. It envisages the existence of a 'society' (*Gesellschaft*) composed of independent actors, but believes that all are 'engaged in a single, common enterprise' and consequently share a common understanding of 'the good of all', or the 'social good'. It assumes that there are shared normative values such as democracy and 'human rights' which should be available to all. This 'morality of the common good' corresponds to Max Weber's 'ethic of ultimate ends', which decrees absolute and unconditional fidelity to principle.[57] This understanding of morality has become highly influential in the West. The problem with it is that it can lead to a crusading, messianic and imperialist mentality, whereby one's own understanding of the 'good life' – with its associated, and culturally rooted conceptions of 'liberty', 'democracy' and 'freedom' – is seen as justifying intervention in states and societies with different conceptions of the 'good'. As Oakeshott notes,

> every moral ideal is potentially an obsession; the pursuit of moral ideals is an idolatry in which particular objects are recognised as 'gods'. . . . Too often the excessive pursuit of one ideal leads to the exclusion of others, perhaps all others; in our eagerness to realize justice we come to forget charity, and a passion for righteousness has made many a man hard and merciless. There is, indeed, no ideal the pursuit of which will not lead to disillusion; *chagrin* waits at the end for all who take this path.[58]

The third idiom of moral conduct is the one most appropriate to a Realist ethics – a 'morality of individuality'. This involves give and take, mutual accommodation and a pursuit of 'enlightened' self-interest. 'In general', Oakeshott argues, 'moral activity may be said to be the observation of a balance of accommodation between the demands of desiring selves each recognized by the others to be an end and not a mere slave of somebody else's desires.'[59] It corresponds to an 'ethic of responsibility', which specifies that one should consider the consequences of one's actions for others and behave accordingly. In Oakeshott's 'morality of individuality', the agents are individual human beings, but the moral sentiments expressed apply equally well to international politics where the primary actors are states;[60] in the morality of individuality, he argues,

> human beings are recognized . . . as separate and sovereign individuals, associated with one another, not in the pursuit of a single common enterprise, but in an enterprise of give and take, and accommodating themselves to one another as best they can: it is the morality of self and other selves. Here individual choice is pre-eminent and a great part of happiness is connected with its exercise. Moral conduct is recognised as consisting in determinate relationships between these individuals,

> and the conduct understood to be characteristic of human beings. Morality is the art of mutual accommodation.[61]

A 'morality of individuality', applied to the realm of international politics, thus provides the basis for a non-teleological ethics characterised by three principles: prudence, scepticism and reciprocity. Realist ethics are *prudent* in that they are circumspect and modest; they seek not perfection but the lesser evil, the familiar to the unknown, the tried to the untried, 'present laughter to utopian bliss'.[62] Prudence entails not only restraining those of evil intent, but also those who intend only good, yet whose pursuit of justice and the *summum bonum* threats to destroy what order, security and justice does exist in the international system.[63] Realist prudence thus seeks to guard against the zealous pursuit of utopian visions at the expense of order and security. This prudence gives rise to *scepticism* about the human capacity to achieve perfect justice through political action.[64] Realists are sceptical about the possibilities of, and potential for, political action to produce the 'good life', and sceptical about the prospects for progress in the human condition, either through scientific and technological innovation, economic interdependence or 'rational' political action. For Realists, politics more often than not involves choosing between the lesser of two evils.[65] Finally, realist ethics are based on *reciprocity* in that they call for compromise, restraint, mutual accommodation and 'give and take' between sovereign political communities, each with their own vision of the *summum bonum*. This conception of international politics as an arena for competitive interest-based politics accords with Weber's 'ethic of responsibility'.[66] By emphasising the importance of reciprocity, statesmen and women 'may save themselves from the temptation to believe that they have a special commission for the reform or punishment of a recalcitrant world'.[67]

To conclude: Realism does indeed provide firm foundations for ethical thinking about international politics. It is not, as its critics allege, amoral or immoral. Liberals imply that an ethical foreign policy must involve a commitment to strengthening international society, the rule of law and multilateral institutions; critical theorists maintain that an ethical approach involves seeking to transcend international anarchy and achieve security through 'emancipation'. Both variants of liberal-idealism associate ethical behaviour with teleological and 'rationalist' politics, and hold to a 'morality of the common good' and an 'ethic of ultimate ends'. Realist ethics, on the other hand, are based on a 'morality of individuality', not a morality of communal ties or of the common good. They incorporate an 'ethics of responsibility', and are characterised by prudence, scepticism and reciprocity.[68] Realists recognise that ethical behaviour will always be constrained by the 'strategic selectivity of structure', and that there is no easy escape from Churchill's 'tormenting dilemmas upon which mankind has throughout its history been so frequently impaled'. 'Politics', as Reinhold Niebuhr observed, 'will, to the end of history, be an area where conscience and power meet, where the ethical and coercive factors of human life will interpenetrate and work out their tentative and uneasy compromises.'

IV CONCLUSION

'KBO'

The challenge of multipolarity in post-Cold War Europe presents decision-makers with an array of complex and multifaceted problems. Some of their time will be devoted to second-order policy issues, in which core national interests are not centrally at stake, and where, consequently, normative values will tend to shape the agenda. The bulk of their time will be taken up in dealing with the 'friction' generated by sovereign states as they ceaselessly jostle for position and advantage in a competitive self-help system. Occasionally, however, there will be moments of rare drama, when issues vital to the national security or the core national interests of one or more major states are threatened. This will precipitate an intense and adrenalin-charged phase of crisis diplomacy, accompanied by negotiation, posturing and threats.

Crises apart, balanced multipolarity presents a paradoxical situation for European decision-makers. On the one hand, the absence of a potential hegemon in their midst means there is no 'clear and present danger' against which to balance. On the other, the peeling away of bipolar 'overlay' and the emergence of a multipolar order has created a more complex and multi-faceted policy environment in the European security system. This has produced intricate new patterns of diplomatic interaction between the European great powers, complicating their strategic calculations and placing ever greater demands on their diplomatic skills. Whilst there is little immediate danger of great power conflict within Europe, the security environment is much less benign than many liberal-idealists expected in the heady days of the *annus mirabilis*. Europe today faces a complex security agenda which includes 'hard' security issues like proliferation, terrorism and regional conflicts, as well as 'soft' issues like 'drugs and thugs', immigration and global health threats.

Changes in the international structural distribution of relative power capabilities present Europe's great powers with three major challenges: responding to a US hyperpower seeking to maximise its power and influence; accommodating or resisting a resurgent Russia; and dealing with a Germany that has relearnt its old great power role as the fulcrum of the European balance of power. In addressing these strategic issues, European states cannot fall back on the optimistic teleology of an 'ever closer union' as a safeguard for European security and cooperation. Nor can they rely on an American 'pacifier', or the security blanket of NATO. Institutions are proving to be fair-weather friends, which provide vehicles for the great powers to cooperate in tackling common security threats and to collectively shape their milieu when the balance of power is in equilibrium, but which have little ability to constrain state behaviour when the latter's vital national interests are at stake.[69]

Europe's multipolar future will therefore be challenging and demanding for Europe's decision-makers. They face multiple problems, intractable dilemmas

and paradoxical demands, all of which contain the ingredients for tragedy: outcomes will be thwarted by systemic pressures, whilst good intentions will lead to unexpected difficulties. The competitive logic of international anarchy will prove unforgiving for the naive or the faint at heart. The time for liberal-idealist illusions in a Europe 'whole and free' is past; Europe's future will be a uncertain, if not troubled, time, characterised by an ongoing 'war on terrorism' which may well last a generation or more, along with the shadow of nuclear proliferation in the Middle East, and unpredictable international crises sparked by great power rivalry and security competition.

In the context of multipolar uncertainty and the manifold challenges of a new world *disorder*, Europe's leaders would do well to recall Winston Churchill's wartime adage, 'KBO'.[70] In the dark days of 1940–41, when the power of Nazi Germany was at its height and Great Britain stood with its back to the wall, Churchill would scribble 'KBO' on the papers and memos of his staff. It stood for: 'Keep Buggering On'.

NOTES

1 INTRODUCTION

1 Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society. A Study in Ethics and Politics* (London: Continuum, 2005 [1932]), p. 3.

2 European Union, *A Secure Europe in a Better World. European Security Strategy* (Brussels: the EU Institute for Security Studies, 2003).

3 James Woolsey in his nomination hearings in 1993 prior to his appointment as head of the CIA. Quoted in John Mueller, *Quiet Cataclysm. Reflections on the Recent Transformation of World Politics* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), p. 14.

4 'Neorealism occupies a paradoxical position in contemporary IR. It is the theory that is most frequently proclaimed dead; and it is the theory that is most frequently proclaimed dominant.' William Wohlforth, 'The Russian-Soviet Empire: A Test of Neorealism', *Review of International Studies*, vol. 27 (December 2001), pp. 213–36 (p. 233).

5 Herbert Marcuse once noted that Marxism was taught in French universities in order to dismiss it: much the same can be said for the way realism, particularly neorealism, is taught in many British universities. As John Mearsheimer has argued 'idealism is now more firmly entrenched among British international relations scholars than it was in the late 1930s', to the extent that Britain is now a largely 'realist-free zone'. John Mearsheimer, 'E.H. Carr vs Idealism: The Battle Rages On', *International Relations*, vol. 19, no. 2 (2005), pp. 139–52 (pp. 140, 144). See also 'Roundtable: the Battle Rages on. John J. Mearsheimer *versus* Paul Rogers, Richard Little, Christopher Hill, Chris Brown and Ken Booth', *International Relations*, vol. 19, no. 3 (2005), pp. 337–60.

6 Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: MacGraw-Hill, 1979), p. 123.

7 Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London: Penguin, 1969 [1790)], p. 377.

8 The discipline of International Relations is best conceived as a 'conversation', in Oakeshottian terms. A conversation, Michael Oakeshott argues, consists of many different voices, reflecting different sorts of knowledge, all of which may potentially have something of value to contribute. Conversations may be dominated for a time by one voice and one idiom of knowledge, but others can also make a contribution. For a time, some voices may be heard more than others, but if a conversation is to be sustained and have value for its participants, it cannot be a monologue, or even a dialogue. There must be space for many different theories and approaches within the discipline of International Relations, because the hegemony of any one school of thought is a danger to intellectual creativity and theoretical advancement. Michael Oakeshott, 'The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind', in *Rationalism in*

Politics and Other Essays, new and expanded edition (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1991), pp. 488–541.

9 Europe's detractors include Robert Kagan, *Paradise and Power. America and Europe in the New World Order* (London: Atlantic Books, 2003); its advocates include Robert Cooper, *The Breaking of Nations. Order and Chaos in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Atlantic Books, 2003), and Mark Leonard, *Why Europe Will Run the Twenty-First Century* (London: Fourth Estate, 2005).

10 Kenneth Waltz, 'The Emerging Structure of International Politics', *International Security*, vol. 18, no. 2 (Fall 1993), pp. 44–79 (p. 52).

11 John Mearsheimer, 'Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War', *International Security*, vol. 14, no. 1 (Summer 1990), pp. 5–56.

12 Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 394.

13 As Michael Oakeshott has noted, once man began to confront the paradoxes of life and to enquire into the nature of reality, it was not long before 'it occurred to him to examine the tools of which he was making use'. Once he did so, he realised that the tools individuals were using were many and varied: 'Some sought to turn the soil of ignorance with one tool and some with another, and even when the tool was the same the manner in which it was being used was different.' Michael Oakeshott, 'An Essay on the Relations of Philosophy, Poetry and Reality', in *What is History and Other Essays*, edited by Luke O'Sullivan (Exeter: Imprint Academic, 2004), pp. 67–116 (p. 69).

14 See for example Jeremy Black, *From Louis XIV to Napoleon: the Fate of a Great Power* (London: UCL Press, 1999), pp. 3–5; Paul Schroeder, 'Historical Reality vs. Neo-realist Theory', in Michael Brown, Sean Lynn-Jones and Steven Miller (eds), *The Perils of Anarchy Contemporary Realism and International Security* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), pp. 421–61.

15 H.A.L. Fisher is a prime exponent of this view of the historical method: 'Men wiser and more learned than I have discerned in history a plot, a rhythm, a predetermined pattern. These harmonies are concealed from me. I can see only one emergency following another . . . [there is] only one safe rule for the historian: that he should recognize in the development of human destinies the play of the contingent and the unforeseen.' Quoted by Martin Wight in *International Theory: The Three Traditions,* edited by Gabriele Wight and Brian Porter (London: Leicester University Press, 1994), p. 29.

16 Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean*, vol. II (London: Penguin, 1973), p. 10.

17 Colin Hay calls his book *Political Analysis: A Critical Introduction* (London: Palgrave, 2002), a 'manifesto for a political analysis more conscious and explicit about the underlying assumptions upon which its choice of analytical strategies is premised and more sensitive to the trade-offs necessarily entailed in any choice of foundational premises' (p. 1). The aim of this book is precisely that: to be conscious and explicit about the trade-offs entailed in a structural realist analysis of the European security system.

18 Theories, Hans Morgenthau argued, are used to 'bring order and meaning to a mass of phenomena which without it would remain disconnected and unintelligible'. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations. The Struggle for Power and Peace*, brief edition, revised by Kenneth Thompson (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993), p. 3.

19 Einstein remarked that in1905, the year in which he churned out five papers which transformed the elemental science of physics, 'a storm broke loose in my mind'. Waltz also notes that no theory can be created 'unless at some point a brilliant intuition flashes, a creative idea emerges'. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 9.

20 Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry. Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994) p. 29. They argue that maximising leverage is 'one of the most important achieve-

ments of all social science', and suggest that the primary way to do this is to 'evaluate as many observable implications of your theory as possible'. Leverage increases with the level of abstraction and generality of a scientific proposition.

21 James Rosenau and Mary Durfee, *Thinking Theory Thoroughly: Coherent Approaches to an Incoherent World* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1995), p. 178.

22 This is an abridged version of Rosenau and Durfee's nine points for 'thinking theoretically', *Thinking Theory Thoroughly*, pp. 178–90.

23 Maurice Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions*, edited by Gabriel Wight and Brian Porter (London: Leicester University Press, 1991). For a good overview of these debates, see Brian Schmidt, 'On the History and Historiography of International Relations', in *Handbook of International Relations*, pp. 3–22. See also Stephen M. Walt's 'International Relations: One World, Many Theories', *Foreign Policy* (Spring 1998), pp. 29–46; and Jack Snyder, 'One World, Rival Theories', *Foreign Policy* (November/December 2004), pp. 53–62. Both Walt and Snyder refer to realism, liberalism and 'constructivism' (as an updated form of idealism) as the three dominant approaches.

24 'Children of light' are 'pure idealists' who 'seek to bring self-interest under the discipline of a more universal law and in harmony with a more universal good', whereas the 'children of darkness' are 'moral cynics, who declare that a strong nation need acknowledge no law beyond its strength'. The former 'underestimated the power of self-interest, both individual and collective, in modern society', and the 'peril of anarchy in both the national and the international community'. Reinhold Niebuhr, 'The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness', in Robert McAfee Brown, *The Essential Reinhold Niebuhr: Selected Essays and Addresses* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), pp. 160–81 (pp. 166–7).

25 'Perspectivism' is the belief that there are no serious underlying reasons for different theoretical perspectives and that one can utilise a variety to shed light on an empirical puzzle from a number of different angles. See Burnham, Gilland, Grant and Layton-Henry, *Research Methods in Politics* (London: Palgrave, 2004), p. 23. The case for analytical eclecticism is made by Peter Katzenstein and Nobuo Okawara, 'Japan, Asian-Pacific Security, and the Case for Analytical Eclecticism', *International Security*, vol. 26, no. 3 (Winter 2001), pp. 153–85.

26 Quoted in Heikki Patomäki and Colin Wight, 'After Postpositivism? The Promises of Critical Realism', *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 44, no. 2 (June 2000), pp. 213–38 (pp. 214–15).

27 'Roundtable: The Battle Rages On', *International Relations*, p. 359. Robert Gilpin, however (in 'No One Loves a Realist' reprinted in *Realism: Restatements and Renewal*), argues that liberals 'cannot easily accept the doctrine of intellectual peaceful coexistence' because they tend to believe 'in the overwhelming power of ideas', and thus worry that 'wrong thinking' leads to 'wrong action'. 'Therefore, the task of the liberal is to convert the benighted and to make the world over in the liberal's image. In the liberal's lexicon, therefore, benevolent "truths" must be promulgated; malevolent "untruths" such as those held by realists, must be expunged lest they cause mischief' (pp. 3–4). Mearsheimer makes a similar observation in the roundtable cited above (pp. 357–8).

28 Rosenau and Durfee, *Thinking Theory Thoroughly*, pp. 6–7.

29 Oakeshott, 'Introduction to *Leviathan*', in *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays* (Indianapolis: Liberty Press, 1991), pp. 221–94 (pp. 227, 225–6).

30 Robert Gilpin argues that 'political realism must be seen as a philosophical disposition and set of assumptions about the world rather than as in any strict sense a "scientific" theory'; see 'The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism' in *Neorealism and its Critics*, p. 304.

31 Michael Oakeshott, 'The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind', in *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*, pp. 505–6.
32 It should be noted that Michael Oakeshott – deeply scarred by his experience of studying Politics at Cambridge – believed that Politics could never aspire to the status of 'scientific knowledge', but was best seen as a combination of 'two different manners of understanding, two modes of thought, two explanatory "languages", namely, the "language of history and philosophy"' (a position shared by members of the English School). Oakeshott, 'The Study of "Politics" in a University: An Essay in Appropriateness', in *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays,* pp. 184–218 (p. 212). But then, Oakeshott was writing before Kenneth Waltz produced his Copernican revolution in international political theory.
33 'The contribution of the realist paradigm to the development of a scientific study of international relations has been, first, to point out that science must be empirical and theoretical, not normative and narrowly historical, and second, to provide a picture of the world (i.e. a paradigm) which has permitted the field to develop a common research agenda and to follow it systematically and somewhat cumulatively'. John Vasquez, *The Power of Power Politics*, p. 39.
34 Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 69.
35 Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 60.
36 Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 174. As Peter Gourevitch notes, although there are strong research traditions that hold either system or country constant, 'we do not have very good theories to handle what happens when both are in play, when each influences the other, when the domestic politics of one country interacts with the domestic politics of another, an interaction which itself helps define a system that reverberates back on the parts'. Peter Gourevitch, 'Domestic Politics and International Relations', in *Handbook of International Relations*, pp. 309–28. (p. 321). See also Robert Putnam, 'Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games', *International Organization,* vol. 42, no. 3 (1988), pp. 427–60; and Peter Gourevitch, 'The Second Image Reversed: International Sources of Domestic Politics', *International Organization*, vol. 32, no. 4 (1978), pp. 881–911.
37 He does so by including a rational actor assumption in this theory. See John Mearsheimer, 'Conversations in *International Relations*: Interview with John J. Mearsheimer (Part 1)', *International Relations*, vol. 20, no. 1 (2006), pp. 105–23 (pp. 111–12).
38 John Mearsheimer, 'A Realist Reply', *International Security*, vol. 20, no. 1 (1995), pp. 82–93 (p. 91).
39 Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 9.
40 Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 11.
41 Kenneth Waltz, 'Evaluating Theories', *American Political Science Review*, vol. 91, no. 4 (December 1997), pp. 913–17 (p. 915).
42 Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 71.
43 See Colin Wight, 'Philosophy of Social Science and International Relations'. He notes that 'science is not synonymous with positivism' and that, moreover, 'the discipline's understanding of positivism seems a caricature of what is a sophisticated, although in my opinion highly flawed, philosophy of science' (pp. 35–6). Applying the scientific method to the study of political and social phenomena does not mean using the methods of the natural sciences, which are distinct given their subject matter. Nor does it involve a belief that perfect objective knowledge based on pure value-free social science is possible. Rather, it involves the more limited and modest assumption that 'it is possible to have some knowledge of the external world but that such knowledge is always uncertain'. Perfect objective knowledge may not be possible, but this does not mean that we cannot 'improve the reliability, validity, certainty, and honesty of our

conclusions by paying attention to the rules of scientific inference'. Gary King, Robert Keohane and Sidney Verba, in *Designing Social Inquiry. Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 6. They list four characteristics of scientific research: the goal is to make descriptive or explanatory *inferences* about the world; the procedures are explicit, codified and *public*; the conclusions are *uncertain*; and the content of 'science' is primarily the methods and rules of inference, not the subject matter (pp. 7–9).

44 See Colin Wight, 'Philosophy of Social Science and International Relations', in *Handbook of International Relations*, pp. 23–51; Burnham *et al.*, *Research Methods in Politics*, pp. 23–4; and Colin Hay, *Political Analysis: A Critical Introduction* (London: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 78–86.

45 As Patomäki and Wight note, 'according to critical realism the world is composed not only of events, states of affairs, experiences, impressions, and discourses, but also of underlying structures, powers, tendencies that exist, whether or not detected or known through experience and/or discourse'. Heikki Patomäki and Colin Wight, 'After Post-positivism?', p. 223. On 'depth ontology', see Hay, *Political Analysis*, p. 122, and Burnham *et al*., *Research Methods*, p. 27.

46 Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 6–7. Sounding very much a social constructivist, Waltz also argued that 'what we think of as reality is itself an elaborate conception constructed and reconstructed through the ages. Reality emerges from our own selection and organisation of materials that are available in infinite quantity' (p. 5). See also Kenneth Waltz, 'Evaluating Theories', in John Vasquez and Colin Elman, *Realism and the Balancing of Power: A New Debate* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2003), pp. 49–57 (p. 50).

2 LIBERALISM AND THE END OF THE COLD WAR

1 Chou En Lai at the Geneva conference in 1955.

2 John Mearsheimer, 'Back to the future': Instability in Europe after the Cold War', *International Security*, vol. 15, no. 1 (Summer 1990), pp. 5–56.

3 Frances Fukuyama, 'The End of History', *The National Interest* (Summer 1989), pp. 3–18.

4 Christopher Coker, 'The Myth of the Peace Dividend', *The World Today*, vol. 46, no. 7 (July 1990), pp. 136–8.

5 In 'The End of History', Fukuyama argued that this end of history would be 'a very sad time', in which 'daring, courage, imagination and idealism will be replaced by economic calculation, the endless solving of technical problems, environmental concerns' – what he termed, the 'common marketisation of international relations'. Fukuyama, 'The End of History', pp. 3–18.

6 Pierre Hassner, 'Beyond Nationalism and Internationalism: Ethnicity and World Order', *Survival*, vol. 35, no. 2 (March-April 1993), pp. 49–63 (p. 53).

7 For the French academic, Zaki Laïdi, 1989 buried not just communism, but also two centuries of Enlightenment thinking; it marked not just the End of History, but also the 'end of geography'. Zaki Laïdi, *A World Without Meaning. The Crisis of Meaning in International Politics* (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 7.

8 'The year 1989 marks a break in European history. . . .until 1989, change took place within the established framework of the balance of power and the sovereign independent state. Nineteen eighty-nine was different. To the dramatic changes of that year – the revolutions and the re-ordering of alliances – must be added a fundamental change in the European state system itself.' Robert Cooper, *The Breaking of Nations. Order and Chaos in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Atlantic Books, 2003), p. 3.

9 Yosef Lapid and Friedrich Kratochwil (eds), *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory* (London: Lynne Rienner, 1997).
10 Emmanuel Adler and Michael Barnet, 'Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics', *European Journal of International Relations*, vol. 3, no. 3 (1997), pp. 319–63.
11 Writing from a feminist perspective, Jill Steans has argued that rethinking security 'involves thinking about militarism and patriarchy, maldevelopment and environmental degradation. It involves thinking about the relationship between poverty, debt and population growth. It involves thinking about resources and how they are distributed'. Jill Steans, *Gender and International Relations* (Cambridge: Polity, 1998), p. 129.
12 Keith Krause and Michael Williams (eds), *Critical Security Studies*; Ken Booth (ed.), *Critical Security Studies and World Politics* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2005); and Michael Sheehan, *International Security: An Analytical Survey* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2005).
13 Hew Strachan, 'The Lost Meaning of Strategy', *Survival*, vol. 47, no. 3 (Autumn 2005), pp. 33–45.
14 See for example Seyom Brown, *New Forces, Old Forces and the Future of World Politics* (New York: HarperCollins, 1995), p. 140; Mark Webber *et al.*, 'The Governance of European Security', *Review of International Studies*, vol. 30, no. 1 (January 2004), pp. 3–26; and Ian Clark, *Globalization and Fragmentation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).
15 Robert Cooper, *The Breaking of Nations. Order and Chaos in the Twenty-First Century* (London: Atlantic Books, 2003), pp. 26–37.
16 Danielle Archibugi and David Held (eds), *Cosmopolitan Democracy: An Agenda for a New World Order* (Cambridge: Polity, 1995).
17 John Mueller, *Retreat from Doomsday: The Obsolescence of Major War* (New York: Basic Books, 1989)
18 On liberalism and international politics, see Michael Howard, *War and the Liberal Conscience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978); and Michael Joseph Smith, 'Liberalism and International Reform', in Terry Nardin and David Mapel (eds), *Traditions of International Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 201–24.
19 As Lawrence Freedman notes, 'political debate on both sides of the Atlantic draws on classical liberal values'. Lawrence Freedman, *The Transformation of Strategic Affairs*, Adelphi Paper 379 (London: Routledge for the IISS, 2006), p. 35.
20 On the idea of an 'ethical foreign policy', see Lisbeth Aggestam, *A European Foreign Policy? Role Conceptions and the Politics of Identity in Britain, France and Germany* (Stockholm: University of Stockholm, 2004), pp. 241–5. On *offensive* liberal 'wars of choice', see Lawrence Freedman, 'The Age of Liberal Wars', *Review of International Studies*, vol. 31, special issue 'Force and Legitimacy in World Politics' (December 2005), pp. 93–108.
21 See Sheehan, *International Security*. He quotes Foucault to the effect that when a set of assumptions, definitions and beliefs achieve the status of being regarded as common sense, they become 'discourses of truth', marking out the limits of what is deemed to be 'true knowledge' (pp. 178–9).
22 Cooper, *The Breaking of Nations*, pp. 31, 32.
23 Karl Deutsch, *Political Community in the North Atlantic Area* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957), p. 36; and Emmanuel Adler and Michael Barnett, *Security Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).
24 David Armstrong, 'Law, Justice and the Idea of a World Society', *International Affairs*, vol. 7, no. 3 (July 1999), pp. 547–61 (pp. 559–60).
25 William Wallace, 'The Sharing of Sovereignty: The European Paradox', *Political Studies*, no. 47 (1999), pp. 503–21 (pp. 504–5).

26 'After the end of the World War of 1914 there was a deep conviction and almost universal hope that peace would reign in the world.' Winston Churchill, *The Gathering Storm* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948), p. 3. Julian Lindley-French argues that 'the strategic schizophrenia that is undermining European defence and is such a prominent feature of contemporary European security and defence policies is nothing new. Indeed, there are interesting similiarities with another less than heroic age: the post-Versailles Europe of the 1920s, in which the collective security mission of the League of Nations, founded upon a profoundly idealistic interpretation of the international order, sat uncomfortably alongside more traditional European concepts of power and its balance'. Julian Lindley-French, 'In the Shade of Locarno? Why European Defence is Failing', *International Affairs*, vol. 78, no. 4 (2002), pp. 789–811 (pp. 789–90).
27 Quoted in Knutsen, *A History of International Relations Theory,* p. 186.
28 French Premier Clemenceau found President Wilson priggish and arrogant: 'What ignorance of Europe and how difficult all understandings were with him! He believed you could do everything by formulas and his fourteen points. God himself was content with ten commandments. Wilson modestly inflicted fourteen points on us . . . the fourteen commandments of the most empty theory!' Quoted in Margaret Macmillan, *Peacemakers. The Paris Conference of 1919 and Its Attempt to End War* (London: John Murray, 2001), pp. 40–1.
29 Paul Dukes, *Paths to a New Europe* (London: Palgrave, 2004), pp. 366–7.
30 Quoted in Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p. 31.
31 E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp. 99–100.
32 Christopher Brewin, 'Arnold Toynbee, Chatham House, and Research in a Global Context', in David Long and Peter Wilson (eds), *Thinkers of the Twenty Years' Crisis. Inter-war Idealism Reassessed* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), pp. 277–301.
33 Andreas Osiander, 'History and International Relations Theory', in Anja Hartmann and Beatrice Heuser (eds), *War, Peace and World Orders in European History* (London: Routledge, 2001) pp. 14–24 (p. 17).
34 Torbjörn Knutsen, *A History of International Relations Theory* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992), p. 185.
35 The phrase is attributed by Fred Halliday to Martin Wight; see Fred Halliday, 'The Future of International Relations: Fears and Hopes', in Steve Smith, Ken Booth and Marysia Zalewski (eds), *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 328–39 (p. 319).
36 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, 'Manifesto of the Communist Party', *Selected Works* (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1968), p. 38.
37 Tim Dunne, Michael Cox and Ken Booth, 'Introduction: The Eighty Years Crisis', in Tim Dunne, Michael Cox and Ken Booth (eds), 'The Eighty Years Crisis: International Relations 1919–1939', special issue of *Review of International Studies*, vol. 24 (December 1998), pp. vi–xii (p. vi).
38 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p. cv.
39 As Yugoslavia began to fall apart, the then acting President of the European Council, Jacques Poos, the Foreign Minister of Luxembourg, in a moment of extreme hubris, declared that 'This is the hour of Europe, not the hour of the Americans'. 'If one problem can be solved by the Europeans, it's the Yugoslav problem. This is a European country and it is not up to the Americans and not up to anybody else.' Quoted in Brian White, *Understanding European Foreign Policy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), p. 108.
40 Erwin Schmidl (ed.), *Peace Operations Between War and Peace* (London: Frank Cass, 2000); and Christopher Bellamy, *Knights in White Armour. The New Art of War and Peace*, updated edition (London: Pimlico, 1997).
41 Ignatieff, *Virtual War. Kosovo and Beyond* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2000), p. 7.

42 Jeffrey Anderson and John Goodman, 'Mars or Minerva? A United Germany in a Post-Cold War Europe', in Robert Keohane, Joseph Nye and Stanley Hoffmann (eds), *After the Cold War. International Institutions and State Strategies in Europe, 1989–1991* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993), pp. 23–62.
43 Heinz Gärtner and Ian Cutherbertson (eds), *European Security and Transatlantic Relations After 9/11 and the Iraq War* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).
44 See Timothy Garton Ash, *Free World* (London: Allen Lane, 2004), pp. 54–64.
45 For details, see William Shawcross, *Allies: the United States, Britain and the War in Iraq* (London: Atlantic, 2003), pp. 128–9.
46 Robert Pape, 'Soft Balancing Against the United States', *International Security*, vol. 30, no. 1 (Summer 2005), pp. 7–45
47 Stanley Hoffmann, *Janus and Minerva: Essays on the Theory and Practice of International Politics* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1987), p. 400.
48 See Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, and E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p. 97.
49 'Liberals too often rely on the hidden wiring of a constitution of liberty that simply does not exist at the international level'. James Mayall, 'Tragedy, Progress and the International Order: A Response to Frost', *International Relations*, vol. 17, no. 4 (2003), pp. 497–503 (p. 503).
50 Barry Buzan has expressed dissatisfaction with liberal approaches to IR because liberalism is too closely identified with Western civilisation. See his essay, 'The Growing Relevance of Pluralism?', in Steve Smith, Ken Booth and Marysia Zalewski (eds), *International Theory*, pp. 47–65 (p. 61).
51 Stanley Hoffmann, 'Beyond Realism and Idealism in International Politics', in Stanley Hoffmann, *World Disorders: Troubled Peace in the Post-Cold War Era* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998), pp. 54–70.
52 Linda Weiss, *The Myth of the Powerless State: Governing the Economy in a Global Era* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), p. 2.
53 Philip Cerny, 'Plurilateralism: Structural Differentiation and Functional Conflict in Post-Cold War World Order', *Millennium*, vol. 22, no. 1 (1993), pp. 27–51.
54 Hoffmann, *World Disorders*, p. 62.
55 'What is to prevent moral abstractions like human rights from inducing an absolutist frame of mind which, in defining all human rights violators as barbarians, legitimizes barbarism?.' Michael Ignatieff, *Virtual War: Kosovo and Beyond* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2000), p. 213.
56 Oakeshott, 'The Tower of Babel', in *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays,* p. 476.
57 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p. 12.
58 Vasquez, *The Power of Power Politics*, p. 384.
59 Stanley Hoffmann, *World Disorders. Troubled Peace in the Post-Cold War Era* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 1998), p. 58.

3 REALIST INTERNATIONAL THEORY

1 Carl Von Clausewitz, *On War* [1832], edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1989), p. 132.
2 On these differences see 'Conversations in *International Relations*: Interview with John J. Mearsheimer (Part 1)', *International Relations*, vol. 20, no. 1 (2006), pp. 105–23; and Charles Glaser, 'The Necessary and Natural Evolution of Structural Realism', in John Vasquez and Colin Elman (eds), *Realism and the Balancing of Power* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2003), pp. 266–79.
3 Kenneth Waltz has argued that assumptions need not necessarily be descriptively true. 'In making assumptions about men's (or states') motivations, the world must

be grossly distorted. Descriptions strive for accuracy; assumptions are brazenly false. The assumptions on which theories are built are radical simplifications of the world and are useful only because they are such. Any radical simplification conveys a false impression of the world.' Kenneth Waltz, 'Realist Thought and Neorealist Theory', in Charles Kegley (ed.), *Controversies in International Relations Theory. Realism and the Neoliberal Challenge* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995), pp. 67–82 (p. 72). John Mearsheimer, on the other hand, rejects the view that theories can be based on assumptions that are 'wildly inaccurate descriptive representations of reality'. Theories based on unrealistic or false assumptions will not explain much about how the world works. 'Sound theories are based on sound assumptions.' John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of International Politics* (New York: Norton & Co., 2001), p. 30.

4 Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959).
5 Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), p. 114.
6 Ian Clark, *The Hierarchy of States: Reform and Resistance in the International Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 14–16.
7 Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 115.
8 Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 115.
9 Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, p. 56; see also Gilpin, 'The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism', p. 313.
10 Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 94.
11 Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 128.
12 E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis* (London: Palgrave, 2001), p. 102.
13 Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 30.
14 Graham Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971). Waltz freely admits that 'states are in fact not unitary, purposive actors'; *Theory of International Politics*, p. 119.
15 Joseph Grieco, 'Realist International Theory and the Study of World Politics', in M. Doyle and J. Ikenberry (eds), *New Thinking in International Relations Theory* (Boulder: Westview, 1997), pp. 163–201 (p. 166).
16 Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 31.
17 Robert Keohane, 'Theory of World Politics: Structural Realism and Beyond', in *Neorealism and its Critics*, pp. 158–203 (p. 167).
18 Mearsheimer, 'A Realist Reply', p. 334.
19 Joseph Grieco, 'Realist International Theory and the Study of World Politics', p. 167.
20 Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, pp. 33–4; see also Henry Kissinger, *A World Restored*, 1957, p. 144; and E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp. 104–5.
21 See E.J. Labs, 'Beyond Victory: Offensive Realism and Why States Expand their War Aims', *Security Studies*, vol. 6, no. 4 (1997), pp. 1–49.
22 Glen Snyder, 'Mearsheimer's World – Offensive Realism and the Struggle for Security', *International Security*, vol. 27, no. 1 (2002), pp. 149–73 (p. 172).
23 Joseph Grieco, *Cooperation Among Nations: Europe, America, and Non-Tarriff Barriers to Trade* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1990); Robert Powell, 'Absolute and Relative Gains in International Relations Theory', *American Political Science Review*, vol. 85, no. 4 (December 1991), pp. 1303–20; John Matthews, 'Current Gains and Future Outcomes: When Cumulative Relative Gains Matter', *International Security*, vol. 21, no. 1 (Summer 1996), pp. 112–46.
24 Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 195.

25 Joseph Grieco, 'Understanding the Problem of International Cooperation', in David Baldwin (ed.), *Neorealism and Neoliberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), pp. 301–39 (p. 323).
26 Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 71.
27 Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration: Essays in International Politics* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1962), pp. 73–5.
28 Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 209.
29 Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 198.
30 John Mearsheimer, 'E.H. Carr vs Idealism: The Battle Rages On', *International Relations*, vol. 19, no. 2 (2005), pp. 139–52 (p. 142).
31 'The concept of power', Robert Gilpin has written, 'is one of the most troublesome in the field of international relations and, more generally, political science'. *War and Change in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 13.
32 See Robert Dahl, *Modern Political Analysis* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1965); Roderick Bell, David Edwards and Harrison Wagner (eds), *Political Power: A Reader in Theory and Research* (New York: Collier-Macmillan, 1969); and Steven Lukes, *Power: A Radical View*, second edition (London: Palgrave, 2005).
33 Realism thus builds on the 'elements of national power' approach. 'Power is a means', Waltz argues, 'and the outcome of its use is necessarily uncertain. To be politically pertinent, power has to be defined in terms of the distribution of capabilities; the extent of one's power cannot be inferred from the results one may or may not get' (*Theory of International Politics*, p. 192).
34 On the importance of the 'policy-contingent framework' and the significance of scope and domain, see David Baldwin, 'Power and International Relations', in *Handbook of International Relations*, pp. 177–91 (pp. 178–80).
35 Mearsheimer emphasises a great power's war-fighting capacity. Nonetheless, he notes that economic, technological and industrial capabilities constitute 'latent power', and recognises that states pay attention to this when assessing the balance of power. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, pp. 60–7.
36 E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, pp. 102–30.
37 'Power over opinion' is a form of 'soft power', a term coined by Joseph Nye to refer to 'intangible power resources such as culture, ideology and institutions' in contradistinction to what he termed 'hard command power'. Joseph Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 1990), pp. 31–2. David Baldwin calls soft power 'a huge conceptual misstep in the right direction'; see *Handbook of International Relations*, p. 186.
38 Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis*, p. 102.
39 This is the definition of power capabilities employed by Robert Gilpin in *War and Change in World Politics*, pp. 13–14.
40 Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 131. See also Yunis, *Foreign Policy Analysis*, p. 133.
41 Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers: Economic Change and Military Conflict from 1500 to 2000* (London: Fontana, 1988).
42 Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration*, pp. 73–5. Colin Hay employs a similar distinction between '*power as context-shaping*' and '*power as conduct-shaping*'; see *Political Analysis*, pp. 186–7. Keith Dowding, in *Rational Choice and Political Power* (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1991), notes that changing an actor's incentive structure can be done by adding or subtracting items from that choice set, or changing the relative costs and benefits of pursuing them (p. 48).
43 Kenneth Waltz, 'International Structure, National Force and the Balance of World Power', reprinted in Bell *et al*., *Political Power*, pp. 335–45 (p. 340).

44 Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 72.
45 G. John Ikenberry, *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint, and the Rebuilding of Order after Major Wars* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 102.
46 The 'Correlates of War Project' provides a widely-used social science data set for designating great powers. See Douglas Lemke, 'Great Powers in the Post-Cold War World: A Power Transition Perspective', in T.V. Paul, James Wirtz and Michael Fortmann (eds), *Balance of Power. Theory and Practice in the 21st Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 52–75 (pp. 58–9).
47 Edward Luttwak, *Strategy: the Logic of War and Peace* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap, 2001), pp. 69, 73.
48 Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (London: Macmillan, 1977), p. 202.
49 'For a country not to choose to become a great power is a structural anomaly. For that reason, the choice is a difficult one to sustain. Sooner or later, usually sooner, the international status of countries has risen in step with their material resources. Countries with great-power economies have become great powers, whether or not reluctantly. Japanese and German reasons for hesitating to take the final step into the great-power arena are obvious and need not be rehearsed.' Kenneth Waltz, 'The Emerging Structure of International Politics', p. 66.
50 Hanns Maull, 'Germany and Japan: The New Civilian Powers', *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 69, no. 5 (1990), pp. 91–106.
51 Jennifer Lind, 'Pacifism or Passing the Buck? Testing Theories of Japanese Security Policy', *International Security*, vol. 29, no. 1 (Summer 2004), pp. 92–121; Christopher Hughes, *Japan's Re-Emergence as a "Normal" Military Power*, Adelphi Paper 368–9 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); 'Japan's New Defence Posture: Towards Power Projection', *IISS Strategic Comments*, vol. 10, no. 8 (October 2004).
52 'You should understand, therefore, that there are two ways of fighting: by law or by force. The first way is natural to men, and the second to beasts. But as the first way often proves inadequate one must needs have recourse to the second. So the Prince must understand how to make a nice use of the beast and the man. The ancient writers taught princes about this by an allegory, when they described how Achilles and many other princes of the ancient world were sent to be brought up by Chiron, the centaur, so that he might train them his way. All the allegory means, in making the teacher half beast and half man, is that a prince must know how to act according to the nature of both, and that he cannot survive otherwise.' Machiavelli, *The Prince* (London: Penguin, 1962), p. 99.
53 Howard Williams, *International Relations and Political Theory* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1992), pp. 45–55.
54 Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Prison Notebooks* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971), pp. 169–70.
55 See Colin Hay, Michael Lister and David Marsh (eds), *The State: Theories and Issues* (London: Palgrave, 2006), pp. 7–9; and Graeme Gill, *The Nature and Development of the Modern State* (London: Palgrave, 2003), pp. 3–7.
56 'The security of a domestic order resides in the preponderant power of authority, that of an international order in the balance of forces and in its expression, the equilibrium.' Henry Kissinger, *A World Restored*, p. 145.
57 Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, pp. 9–49.
58 Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 2.
59 Ian Clark, *The Hierarchy of States: Reform and Resistance in the International Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 14–16.

60 On the distinction between unipolar and hegemonic systems, see Robert Pape, 'Soft Balancing Against the United States', *International Security*, vol. 30, no. 1 (Summer 2005), pp. 7–45 (pp. 11–13).
61 Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 194–5.
62 On the nature of a 'superpower', see Christer Jönsson, *Superpower. Comparing American and Soviet Foreign Policy* (London: Frances Pinter, 1984), pp. 13–30.
63 Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, pp. 44–5.
64 Kissinger, *A World Restored*, p. 315. See also John Mearsheimer, 'The False Promise of International Institutions', *International Security*, vol. 19 (1994/95), pp. 5–49 (pp. 35–7).
65 Daniel Deudney uses the phrase 'realism plus geography' to describe this approach: see his chapter 'Geopolitics and Change', in Michael Doyle and John Ikenberry (eds), *New Thinking in International Relations Theory* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1997), pp. 91–123 (pp. 96–7).
66 The terms 'universal' and 'contingent' power balances are outlined in William Wohlforth, 'Revisiting Balance of Power Theory in Central Eurasia', in Paul, Wirtz and Fortmann (eds), *Balance of Power*, pp. 214–38 (p. 216).
67 Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 6–7, 28.
68 Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 40.
69 Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, p. 41.
70 Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, pp. 41–2.
71 Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, pp. 252–61.
72 This understanding of the deductive logic of offensive realism differs from that of John Mearsheimer. For an offensive realist, Mearsheimer has a curiously passive and defensive understanding of US grand strategy. He assumes that as a regional hegemon, the USA will disengage from other regions and adopt a 'buck-passing' strategy, intervening as an 'off-shore balancer' only as a last resort. The analysis presented here, however, suggests that the competitive logic of international anarchy will provide powerful incentives for a unipolar *hyperpuissance* to pursue a more active, interventionist and assertive foreign policy designed to consolidate its international primacy.
73 Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, pp. 121–3.
74 Colin Elman, 'Horses for Courses: Why *Not* Neorealist Theories of Foreign Policy?', *Security Studies*, vol. 6, no. 1 (Autumn 1996), pp. 7–53.
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4 Andrew Linklater, 'Neo-realism in Theory and Practice', in Ken Booth and Steve Smith (eds), *International Relations Theory Today* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), pp. 241–62 (p. 258).

5 John Vasquez, 'The New Debate on Balancing Power: A Reply to My Critics', in *Realism and the Balancing of Power*, pp. 87–113 (p. 109).

6 John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, 'An Unnecessary War', *Foreign Policy*, 134 (January/February 2003), pp. 51–9; John Mearsheimer, 'Hans Morgenthau and the Iraq War: Realism versus Neo-Conservatism' (2005). Online, available at www.openDemocracy.net; John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, 'The Israel Lobby', *London Review of Books*, vol. 28, no. 6 (23 March 2006). See also the broadly-based 'Coalition for a Realist Foreign Policy', www.realisticforeignpolicy.org.

7 See for example Andrew Linklater, *The Transformation of Political Community. Ethical Foundations of the Post-Westphalian Era* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998); Richard Falk, *One Humane Governance: Towards a New Global Politics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995); and Mary Kaldor, *Global Civil Society: An Answer to War* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2003).

8 'Political realism refuses to identify the moral aspirations of a particular nation with the moral laws that govern the universe.' Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations. The Struggle for Power and Peace*, brief edition, revised by Kenneth Thompson (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1993), p. 13.

9 E.H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations*, second edition (New York: Palgrave, 2001), p. 78.

10 David Chandler, *From Kosovo to Kabul: Human Rights and International Intervention* (London: Pluto Press, 2002). Chandler criticises 'political engineering liberal academics and scholars' who have used the 'human rights discourse of ethical politics' to 'recast politics as non-political ethics'. He warns against the liberal temptation to replace politics by morality as a guide to action, and concludes that 'the human rights discourse itself is deeply corrosive of the political process' (pp. 223–5, 209, 236).

11 David Clinton, *The Two Faces of National Interest* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994), p. 259.

12 In his debate with Zbigniew Brzezinski on the future of China, John Mearsheimer argues that 'To predict the future in Asia, one needs a theory that explains how rising powers are likely to act and how other states will react to them . . . the reason that we have to privilege theory over political reality is that we cannot know what political reality is going to look like in the year 2025. . . . What are the Chinese leaders and people going to think about Taiwan in 2025? We have no way of knowing. So today's political realities get washed out of the equation, and what really matters is the theory that one employs to predict the future.' See 'Debate: Clash of the Titans', *Foreign Policy Special Report*, January–February 2005, pp. 46–50 (pp. 47–9).

13 'A theory that seems to apply everywhere all the time is likely to be of little practical utility. Any theory worth its salt is likely to be wrong about some things and simply inapplicable to others.' William Wohlforth, 'Revisiting Balance of Power Theory in Eurasia', in T.V. Paul, James Wirtz and Michel Fortmann (eds), *Balance of Power: Theory and Practice in the 21st Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 214–38 (p. 234).

14 William Wohlforth, 'Measuring Power – and the Power of Theory', in John Vasquez and Colin Elman (eds), *Realism and the Balancing of Power*, p. 251.

15 Robert Gilpin, 'The Richness of the Realist Tradition', Robert Keohane (ed.), *Neo-realism and Its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 301–21 (pp. 312, 318).

16 Benjamin Frankel (ed.), *Realism: Restatements and Renewal* (London: Frank Cass, 1996); Stephen Van Evera, *Causes of War: Power and the Roots of Conflict* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999).

17 Michael Brown, Owen Coté, Sean Lynn-Jones and Steven Miller (eds), *Offense, Defense, and War* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2004).

18 Gideon Rose, 'Neoclassical Realism and Theories of Foreign Policy', *World Politics*, vol. 51, no. 1 (October 1998), pp. 144–72.

19 John Mearsheimer, 'Back to the Future', in Michael Brown, Sean Lynn-Jones and Steven Miller (eds), *The Perils of Anarchy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1995), pp. 78–129 (pp. 94, 128–9).

20 John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, 'The Israel Lobby', *London Review of Books*, vol. 28, no. 6 (23 March 2006).

21 This debate can be found in Vasquez and Elman (eds), *Realism and the Balancing of Power*.
22 Vasquez and Elman (eds), *Realism and the Balancing of Power*, p. 301.
23 Christopher Layne, 'Measuring Power – and the Power of Theories', in Vasquez and Elman (eds), *Realism and the Balancing of Power*, pp. 250–65 (pp. 257–8).
24 Charles Glasner, 'The Necessary and Natural Evolution of Structural Realism', in Vasquez and Elman (eds), *Realism and the Balancing of Power*, pp. 266–79 (p. 275).
25 Andrew Linklater, *The Transformation of Political Community* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), p. 15.
26 Jack Donnelly notes that neo-realism demonstrates a 'striking lack of attention to moral issues', given its focus on 'the development of positive explanatory theory'. However, he muses that, 'in the light of the relatively limited scope and aspirations of most neo-realist theorists', and if structural realism is conceived as 'a very rough first approximation rather than a comprehensive theory of international relations', space might be opened up 'within the field for the discussion of moral issues'. He also suggests that there 'may even be a new opening for at least a constructive interchange between realists and those more actively concerned with moral issues in international relations'. Jack Donnelly, 'Twentieth-Century Realism', in Terry Nardin and David Mapel (eds), *Traditions of International Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 85–111 (pp. 107–8).
27 Andrew Hurrell, 'Norms and Ethics in International Relations', in Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse and Beth Simmons (eds), *Handbook of International Relations* (London: Sage, 2002), pp. 137–54 (p. 137).
28 Hurrell, 'Norms and Ethics in International Relations', in Carlsnaes, Risse and Simmons (eds), *Handbook of International Relations*, p. 137.
29 Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, p. 7.
30 Alexander Wendt, John Mearsheimer writes, implies 'that realists like me are irresponsible and do not care much about the welfare of future generations'. But, he argues, liberal institutionalists and critical theorists make claims about the 'peace-causing effects of institutions' which they cannot substantiate empirically, and which lead to poor policy choices. 'A Realist Reply', in Michael Brown, Owen Coté, Sean Lynn-Jones and Steven Miller (eds), *Theories of War and Peace* (Cambridge: MA: MIT Press, 2000), pp. 427–38 (pp. 437–8)
31 Andrew Hurrell, 'Norms and Ethics in International Relations', in Carlsnaes, Risse and Simmons (eds), *Handbook of International Relations*, p. 137.
32 There is an interesting parallel here with Marxist theories of politics and ethics. See Michael Evans, *Karl Marx* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1975), p. 105.
33 Michael Oakeshott, 'The Moral Life in the Writings of Thomas Hobbes', *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*, pp. 295–350 (p. 295).
34 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works in One Volume* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1973), p. 96.
35 On 'critical realism' in the social sciences, see Colin Hay, *Political Analysis: A Critical Introduction* (London: Palgrave, 2002), pp. 116–17, 122–6.
36 See for example Ken Booth, 'Dare Not to Know: International Relations Theory versus the Future', in Ken Booth and Steve Smith (eds), *International Relations Theory Today* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1995), pp. 328–50.
37 Robert Gilpin, 'The Richness of the Tradition of Political Realism', in Robert Keohane, *Realism and Its Critics*, p. 321.
38 Mearsheimer, 'A Realist Reply', in Brown, Coté, Lynn-Jones and Miller (eds), *Theories of War and Peace*, pp. 427–40 (p. 436).
39 Campbell Craig, *Glimmer of a New Leviathan: Total War in the Realism of Niebuhr, Morgenthau, and Waltz* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), pp. 171–3.

40 ‘The prospect of world government would be an invitation to prepare for world civil war.’ Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 112.
41 ‘We might not like realism’s emphasis on tragedy and evil, but we have yet to find a way to escape it.’ Sean Lynn-Jones, ‘Realism and Security Studies’, in *Contemporary Security and Strategy*, p. 71.
42 Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 111.
43 A prime example is the ‘political reformers of the time of Louis XIV’, who invented rational plans for European peace based on pure intelligence but no practical understanding of diplomacy and statecraft. Michael Oakeshott, ‘Rational Conduct’, *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*, pp. 99–131 (p. 113).
44 ‘How often have statesmen been motivated by the desire to improve the world, and ended up by making it worse? And how often have they sought one goal, and ended by achieving something they neither expected nor desired?.’ Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, p. 6.
45 Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, p. 16.
46 Oakeshott, ‘The Political Economy of Freedom’, *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*, pp. 384–406 (p. 397).
47 A prime example of this is the Anglo-American strategic bombing campaign against Germany in the Second World War, which Michael Walzer examines in *Just and Unjust Wars* (New York: Basic Books, 1977), pp. 255–63; Michael Walzer, *Arguing About War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004), pp. 33–4.
48 Kenneth Waltz, *Foreign Policy and Democratic Politics: The American and British Experience* (Boston: Little and Brown, 1967), pp. 15–16.
49 Kenneth Waltz, ‘Reflections on *Theory of International* Politics: A Response to my Critics’, in Keohane (ed.), *Neorealism and Its Critics*, pp. 322–46 (pp. 343–4).
50 Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society*, p. 180.
51 Winston S. Churchill, *The Gathering Storm* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1948), p. 320.
52 See for example, Mervyn Frost, ‘Tragedy, Ethics and International Relations’, *International Relations*, vol. 17, no. 4 (2003), pp. 477–95.
53 Oakeshott, ‘Logos and Teleos’, *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*, pp. 351–60 (p. 358). Oakeshott defines ‘rational’ activity as ‘behaviour in which an independently premeditated end is pursued and which is determined solely by that end’. ‘Rational Choice’, *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*, pp. 99–131 (p. 102). The most powerful and moving example of religious prophecy is Isaiah chapter 2, verses 2–4: ‘He shall judge between the nations, and shall arbitrate for many peoples; they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war no more’ (v.4). See also Michah 4 (4), and Joel 3 (9–10).
54 Michael Oakeshott, ‘Political Education’, *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*, pp. 43–69 (p. 66).
55 Michael Oakeshott, ‘Political Education’, *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*, pp. 43–69 (p. 60).
56 Barry Buzan and Ana Gonzalez-Pelaez, ‘International Community after the Iraq War’, *International Affairs*, vol. 81, no. 1 (2005), pp. 31–52 (p. 35).
57 In his lecture on ‘Politics as a Vocation’, Max Weber distinguished between an ‘ethic of ultimate ends’ and an ‘ethic of responsibility’. The former linked ethical behaviour to a distinctive teleos, and believed that if ‘an action of good intent leads to bad results, then, in the actor’s eyes, not he but the world, or the stupidity of other men, or God’s will who made them thus, is responsible for the evil’. An ethic of responsibility involved the consideration ‘of precisely the average deficiencies of people’ and an unwillingness to burden others with the results of their actions as far

as they could be foreseen. Quoted in Lawrence Freedman, 'The Transatlantic Agenda: Vision and Counter-Vision', *Survival*, vol. 47, no. 4 (Winter 2005–06), pp. 19–38 (p. 22); Owen Harries, 'Power and Morals', *Prospect*, April 2005, pp. 26–31 (p. 28).

58 Oakeshott, 'The Tower of Babel', *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*, pp. 465–87 (p. 476).

59 Oakeshott, 'The Voice of Poetry in the Conversation of Mankind', *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*, pp. 488–542 (p. 502).

60 Richard Tuck, *The Rights of War and Peace: Political Thought and the International Order from Grotius to Kant* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 140, 226.

61 Oakeshott, 'The Moral Life in the Writings of Thomas Hobbes', *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*, pp. 295–350 (p. 297).

62 Oakeshott, 'On Being Conservative', *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*, pp. 407–37 (p. 408).

63 'There can be no political morality without prudence; that is, without consideration of the political consequences of seemingly moral action. Realism, then, considers prudence – the weighing of the consequences of alternative political actions – to be the supreme virtue in politics. Ethics in the abstract judges action by its conformity with the moral law; political ethics judges action by its political consequences.' Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, p. 12.

64 Michael Loriaux, 'Realism and Reconciliation: France, Germany, and the European Union', in Ethan Kapstein and Michael Mastanduno (eds), *Unipolar Politics: Realism and State Strategies After the Cold War* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp. 354–84 (pp. 375–9).

65 'We are men, not God; we are responsible for making choices between greater and lesser evils, even when our Christian faith, illuminating the human scene, makes it quite apparent that there is no pure good in history; and probably no pure evil either. The fate of civilisations may depend on these choices.' Niebuhr, quoted in Robin Lovin, *Reinhold Niebuhr and Christian Realism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 73.

66 Henry Kissinger, *A World Restored*, pp. 144–5.

67 David Clinton, *The Two Faces of National Interest*, p. 258.

68 Lawrence Freedman notes that the pragmatic approach embodied in Weber's 'ethic of responsibility', which embodies 'a concern for the foreseeable consequences of actions, represents the best traditions of statecraft'. Lawrence Freedman, 'The Transatlantic Agenda: Vision and Counter-Vision', *Survival*, p. 22.

69 Julian Lindley-French, 'In the Shade of Locarno? Why European Defence is Failing', *International Affairs*, vol. 78, no. 4 (2002), pp. 789–811 (p. 800).

70 Stephen Bungay, *Alamein* (London: Aurum Press, 2002), p. 115. 'KBO' is a Churchillian rendition of the wartime British poster 'Keep Calm and Carry On'. Apparently, Stephen Kappes, the deputy director of the CIA, once hung a copy of this on his office wall. Mark Mazzetti, 'CIA Official who Quit in Anger is Returning in No.2 post', *International Herald Tribune*, 31 May 2006.

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